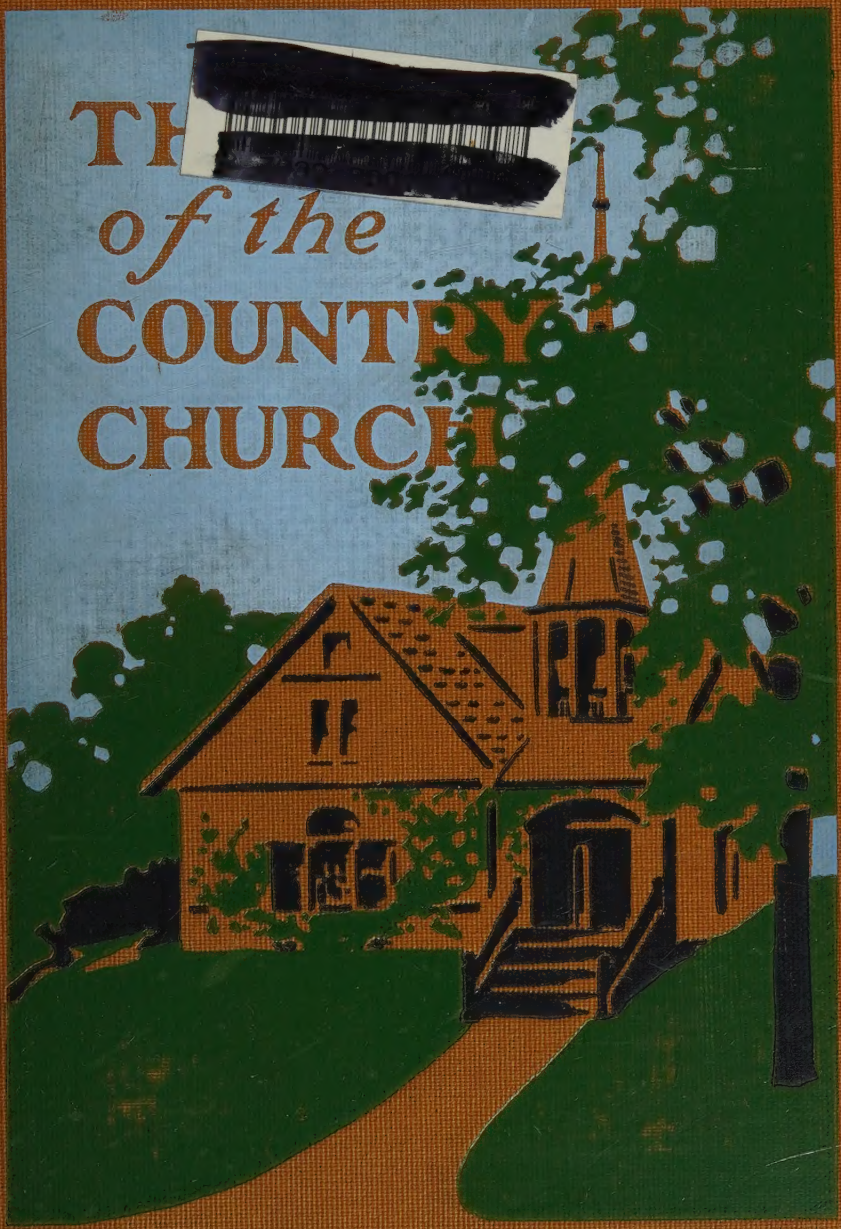

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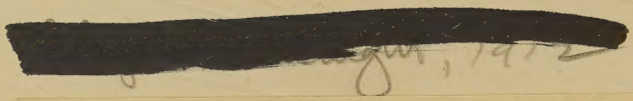

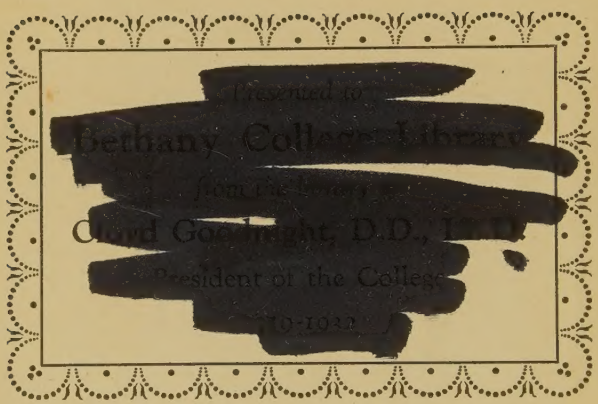

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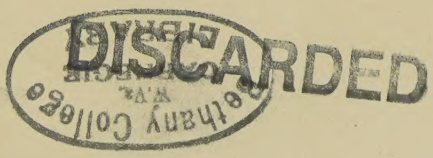

THE DAY OF THE COUNTRY CHURCH

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By

J. O. ASHENHURST

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TO MY WIFE

BY WHOSE INSPIRATION AND ENCOURAGEMENT THE WORK HAS BEEN POSSIBLE,

THIS BOOK
IS INSCRIBED

24689

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A WORD TO BEGIN WITH

This book does not attempt a scientific treatment of the problems of the rural districts and the rural churches. Its message is the growth of experience in the rural pastorate, and the limitations of a country pastor's work do not permit the thorough investigation and consultation of libraries necessary for scientific study. The book will attain its mission, therefore, if it simply aids in awakening public interest and directing public thought to the movement for the Christianization and social improvement of the rural districts of America—a matter of vital importance to the preservation and progress of our national life.

As far as possible, I have given in foot-notes the authorities to whom I am indebted for information. I here express my special obligation to the Rev. George Frederick Wells for a typewritten list of

writings on practical country-church problems and for other documents which he kindly furnished. I take pleasure, also, in acknowledging practical assistance rendered at the very beginnings of these studies by the Rev. S. G. Huey, of St. Louis.

J. O. ASHENHURST.

R. D. 2, Pemberville, Ohio
May, 1910

THE DAY OF THE COUNTRY CHURCH

I

THE OPPORTUNITY OF THE COUNTRY CHURCH

SOME are asserting that the country church has had its day. They admit that it held a position of importance and influence in the early part of our national existence. But it is asserted that the changes of the past half-century have shifted the centers of life and power to social, political, industrial, and commercial interests, and, as the rural districts have been depleted in population, the country churches are passing, and communities which once stood high in point of influence have been reduced to an insignificant factor in moral progress, or have become a positive peril to the national welfare. Various forms of rural

Has It Had Its Day?

settlement have been advocated as social institutions fitted to take the place once accorded to the Church. If the country church were indeed a thing of the past, or if it were a passing institution, it would be worth while to discuss those plans which have been proposed by which a substitute would be provided. But the country church has not yet had its day; it is not a thing of the past. On the contrary, it is a factor of increasing importance in the combination of forces that are operating for the uplift of the rural districts in social and religious life.

There is a "great door and effectual" opened to the country church. This is the day of its opportunity in the rural districts of our land.

The character of our rural population is an important feature in the opportunity that lies before the country church. In Turkey, the farmer is merely a fellah; in Europe, the peasant is merely the "man with the hoe"; in China, the farmer has nothing in common with the ruling class; and in India he belongs to one of the lower castes.

Our Rural Character

The American farmer holds a unique position among the agricultural population of the world. Our farmers are, as a rule, intelligent

and respected citizens. The farming class furnishes a large part of the brain and nerve power which forms the character of our national life. It is not amid the depressing scenes of the city, where children grow up without the impress of nature through the sight of green fields and beautiful forests, that we find the greatest encouragement for the future of our race; but we look with hope to the people who live under the bright sky and breathe the pure air of the country. If the simple life is the ideal means for the development of a strong race, if "back to the soil" is to be the slogan of the better day, then the rural neighborhoods are of great importance. More than fifty million of the population of the United States is found in these rural communities. The character and condition of this large mass of people must have a profound influence upon the progress of our nation, and presents a most hopeful field for missionary and evangelistic efforts.

The New Country Life

The improved economic and social conditions which now exist in the country increase the opportunity and importance of the Church in the country. The problems of evangelization are distinctly af-

fected by the recent progress in material and social conditions. The efficiency of the work of the Church is modified by the general social, industrial, educational, economic, and sanitary conditions. It would be perilous for the Church to ignore the changing material conditions in the country. Country life is rapidly changing through the extension of the rural mail delivery, the telephone, the electric railways, good roads, agricultural machinery, scientific farming, and other improvements. Homes are being built or remodeled with all the comforts and conveniences of city dwellings. True, these added comforts and luxuries of country life do not always dispose the people to consider more favorably the claims of religion, but they vitally affect the importance of the work of the Church in the wider fields created by these improvements.

From the beginning of our national existence, there has been an increasing proportion of our population in the cities. Dr. Strong has shown that in 1790 four per cent of the population of the United States was urban, while ninety-six per cent was rural. In 1896 about thirty per cent was urban and seventy per cent was rural. Since that time the

rural population has decreased to sixty-five per cent.[1] At the present time this tendency to crowd into the cities is receiving some check.[2] There is a growing interest in country life. It is now regarded as more desirable than it once was. It is attracting public attention and commanding public respect as it has not done in the past. In 1882 there were only five States that had agricultural experiment stations. Farmers' institutes had scarcely begun before 1870. To-day the Federal and State governments are assisting the farmers to secure a mastery of the science of agriculture. The "new farmer" is a factor in country life, and in a few years he will work greater changes in farm-life than the fathers wrought when they redeemed the wilderness and the prairie and transformed the wild landscape into the present beautiful scenes of rural life. In this new life the Church finds its wider field of activity. Shall this material advancement become the rival of the Church, absorbing the interest of the people so that they will have no ear

The Awakening

[1] Quoted in address of Rev. S. G. Huey at Winona Bible Conference. "Winona Echoes," 1907, page 88.

[2] See "Rural Christendom" (Roads), page 81.

for the message of the Church, or shall it be accepted and appropriated by the Church as the means by which religious life may be imprest upon the community? To answer this problem is the task of the Church.

Feeding the World

The fundamental nature of rural occupations emphasizes the importance of the country as a field for evangelistic efforts. The sailor, the soldier, the merchant, the doctor, the musician, the artist, the mechanic, the lawyer, all depend upon the products of the soil. The miner can not subsist on the gold he digs, the author can not eat the books he writes, the chemist can not supply his physical wants from the laboratory. The farmer stands between the world and starvation. Entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining human life on the earth, the farmer's occupation is of supreme importance, and no more essential duty can be presented to the Church than this: The development and preservation, in our rural communities, of a sterling, intelligent, God-fearing manhood. And in this fundamental service lies a vast opportunity for effective influence upon the world.

The influence of the country upon the city is an

important factor in the making of the opportunity of the Church in the rural districts. The strongest forces working for righteousness in the cities have their origin in the country. A canvass of one hundred prominent men in one of our great cities showed that eighty-five per cent of lawyers, bankers, merchants, and journalists were brought up in the country. City pastors testify that the best members of their churches have been trained in the country churches. But the country contributes to the forces of evil which are found in the city, as well as to the good. A large proportion of the supply of life which flows from the country is tainted with corruption and vice. A large part of the country people who drift into the city serve no good purpose in the life of the city, but rather increase its serious problems and perils.

Leading the World

Not one-half of the people living in the rural districts of the United States are church-members or even church-goers. It is the inspiring opportunity of the Church to impress a Christian character upon the young people now in the country, who, in a short time, will go into the cities and become an influen-

tial part of the life of those cities for the weal or wo of our nation.

Changing Conditions

The still formative condition of many American rural communities affords an opportunity to the Church. W. L. Anderson says, "The key to the main problem of country life is the thinning out of the rural population in consequence of industrial changes."[1] These industrial changes and the opportunities of the West have affected the old settled communities of the East for many years. While there may be always fluctuations in population, a time must come when cheap open Western lands will no longer draw the people in great numbers from the older communities, and when industrial conditions will become more fixt. As the comforts of farm life increase, and as the farming industry becomes more complex, it will be more difficult for country people to throw aside these encumbrances and to break the bonds of home to settle in new localities, or to go to the city. As nations grow older their population becomes more settled. Altho our nation is so great and powerful and has made such wonderful progress in its de-

[1] "The Country Town," page 121.

velopment, it has not yet reached a state of maturity which leaves no opportunity for development and change. We are still in the formative period of our history in a majority of our rural communities, and this plastic condition is an impressive call to the Church quickly to grasp the importance of the evangelization and Christianization of the towns and hamlets of the open farming country. If the Church prepares itself to undertake at once, in a masterly manner, the work of winning the country people to the loyal service of the kingdom, the spiritual character of our national life will be molded for ages to come.

The Day of Home Missions

The present effective organization of home missions is an important feature in the opportunity of the country church. To say that the country church has had its day, is to ignore the facts of to-day as well as to misinterpret the history of the past. The membership of the Church was never so large as it is now. Let not those who say that "the former days were better than these," forget that infidelity and godlessness were wide-spread in the eighteenth century and in the beginning of the nineteenth century.

It was said of the Scotch-Irish who settled in Londonderry and were very strict in their theology, that "the 'Derry Presbyterians would never give up a p'int of doctrine nor a pint of rum." The soldiers discharged from the Revolutionary War carried back to their home communities the vices attendant upon war. Intemperance, profanity, and revelry prevailed and French infidelity affected not only the colleges but the towns and country as well.

The effective organization of the Church, in its different denominations, is the distinguishing feature of recent American history. An important part of the work of home mission boards is the establishing of churches in new communities. Some of the strongest churches have grown out of home mission stations and aid given by home mission boards has resulted in the development of substantial religious stock in communities, which, without this aid, would have been destitute of religious influences. This is the day of home mission work which recognizes the strategic importance of the new settlements of the West and the weakened country churches in the East.

II

THE EXPANSION OF THE COUNTRY CHURCH

THE Christian Church had its origin in the "hill country of Judea" and among the "men of Galilee." Our Lord's first disciples were from the rural districts of Palestine. But the small group of simple countrymen who first received the good news of the coming kingdom received, also, authority to perfect the organization of the Church, and to preach the gospel of the kingdom far beyond the borders of their own land. This was the beginning of the expansion of the country church from its first home among the farmers and fishermen of Galilee to the "uttermost part of the earth."

The First Country Church

In a specific sense, there has been an expansion of the country church within recent years. Fifty years ago the average country church was an ecclesiastical "shut-in." Distance, bad roads, difficulty of communication, and other causes made the isolation of the farming communities a painful experience in which the

Recent Progress

Church shared. As a result of this isolation, the horizon of the country church was very narrow. Too often the congregation felt no obligation toward the needy world; too often it had but little concern for the unsaved within the bounds of its own parish, confining its services to "maintaining the truth" and "nurturing" its own members. This narrow view was not universal. Through all the history of the Church in America, vigorous evangelistic churches have existed in rural neighborhoods.

In the last generation the influence of the country church has greatly extended. The command of the Savior to the first country church, those men of Galilee, has been heard by the modern country church: "Lift up your eyes and look on the fields." The answer may be seen in the large share the country church is bearing of the work of the evangelization of the world.

In a very practical sense, the country church is expanding into the great advancing movements of the Kingdom of God. Missionaries, Christian statesmen, reformers, and workers for righteousness, in large numbers, owe their spiritual training

to the country churches. It is said that country homes furnish five-sixths of our ministers and six-sevenths of our college professors. The committee on ministerial education of the Southern Presbyterian Church stated that one hundred and fifty-three of three hundred and ninety-two candidates for the ministry of that Church came from congregations of less than one hundred members, and that almost one-half came from homes of farmers. If statistics were obtainable on this subject, some denominations would show, doubtless, even a larger per cent of ministers reared in the country. The expansion of the country church in the lives of men and women trained in these churches is manifested in all the avenues of the world's activities. These modern "men of Galilee" are witnessing for Christ "both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Practical Expansion

The country church must give heed to the command: "Look on the fields." For its own sake, for the sake of the community, and for the sake of the wide world in the interests of the kingdom, the country church should study the fields of its labor

even to the widest expansion of those fields in foreign mission work. The study of home and foreign missions is an essential part of the development of the most humble country church. A small and obscure church, interested in the evangelization of the world, and laboring in this sublime enterprise, possesses a worthy consciousness of its great mission through its intimate relation to the world-wide progress of the kingdom.

"Look on The Fields!"

Excellent courses of mission study are now available through the agencies of the Student Volunteer and Young People's movements. The denominational mission boards furnish such courses, and there are more than twenty-five special secretaries now employed, by different church boards, for the organization and development of mission study in the churches. The enthusiastic study of missions awakens the country church to the lofty ideal which our Lord first placed before it, of expanding to the ends of the earth. Genuine interest in foreign missions gives strength and encouragement to the Church for the task of evangelizing its own community. The work of a country church is discouraging and often depressing in itself. There are

many persons within sound of the church-bell who are not ignorant of the great facts of the gospel, but are indifferent to its call. They are so near and yet so far from the blessings of the kingdom. Pastors and people have prayed for these indifferent unsaved neighbors, and have invited them to the privileges of the gospel, but they remain unaffected and unconcerned. To a church composed of a few earnest, godly persons, surrounded by a community of indifferent neighbors, interest in foreign missions is a great inspiration and comfort. The reflex influence of the foreign mission effort, with its series of inspiring biographies and missionary successes in foreign lands, strengthens the faith of the Church in the power of the gospel to save even these indifferent neighbors, and sends the Christian people forth to the work in their own community, with new hope and earnest prayer. The Church that is lifting its eyes to the great world-field is best fitted to meet effectively the discouraging conditions of local evangelization.

"The Heathen at Home"

The expansion of the Church with the general expansion of rural life, the widening influence and

interest of missionary work, and the practical projection of the power of country churches into the activities of the world through the lives of those who have gone from them into the world's wider fields, give great importance to the Church in the rural communities as a force fitted to impress Christian ideals upon the community life.

III

THE HEART OF THE RURAL COMMUNITY

A COMMUNITY is a body of people having common interests. A rural community is a body of people dwelling in an agricultural or open country having common interests connected with their rural life. The word community applies most fittingly to country life. It loses its force in crowded streets, where people living in the same block do not know one another, or living on adjoining lots, have no common interests. There are common interests which unite certain classes in the city, but all the people in the country are united in common interests, except in the comparatively few country places in which industrial conditions have created different classes having different interests.

What is a Community?

Of those interests which are common in the rural community the most obvious is agriculture. Yet it would be a thoughtless conclusion to suppose that

farming is the common interest of the rural community, to the exclusion of social, educational, and religious interests. A writer on rural sociology declares the highest interest in the community in the following words:

"In studying the moral obligation of a rural neighborhood we must begin with the conception that the chief task of the farmer lies in the development of human personalities, in the cultivation of the spiritual powers, in enriching the permanent self, and in sharing the highest goods of civilization on the widest possible scale."[1]

President Butterfield expresses the same ideal of the chief interest of the rural community in these words:

"Agricultural prosperity is not to be the final result of rural improvement. The rural problem is the preservation upon our American farms of a fine, strong, intelligent, educated, resourceful, honest class of people."[2]

The Choicest Farm Products

[1] Prof. C. H. Richardson in *The Biblical World*

[2] Pres. K. L. Butterfield in *The Homiletic Review*, February, 1908.

In accord with these opinions of students of rural problems, we are justified in the view that the chief interest of farm life is the cultivation of manhood—the development of character. The cultivation of the soil is subordinate to the cultivation of the soul.

These facts being admitted, it follows that the Church, which has for its special field "the development of human personalities, the cultivation of spiritual powers, and enriching of the permanent self," is the very heart of the rural community.

The Heart of the Community

But while the Church holds a place of pre-eminence, it should not ignore other interests of great importance, and it will attain its highest success in its own sphere by recognizing all other true interests of the people and by cooperating with other forces that are working for the common good.

The Church is the normal unifying interest of the community, and notwithstanding its imperfect organization and deficient service, it rests upon the rock foundation of human nature. It is the center of the desires of the people in countless communities as the exhibition and exponent of the gospel.

"Even the rich among the people shall entreat thy favor."[1]

Society is simpler in rural communities than in cities and the Church more naturally takes its place as a social center. The quiet life of the people is fittingly sustained by the Church as the heart of the community. Thoughtfulness, piety, and reverence in the country people, cultivated by their daily contact with nature, find religious expression in the Church. But the Church is a social as well as a religious center. Every church has its social life and its social activities. These should be extended to the community. In an article on the "Federation of Rural Forces," President Butterfield has defined for us the true relations of the various rural institutions. He says:

A Social Center

"We may say (assuming the home life, of course) that the Church, the school, and the farmers' organization are the great rural social institutions.

"Under the Church should be placed all those movements that have a distinctively religious motive; under the school, all those agencies that are primarily educational

Three Rural Institutions

[1] Psalm 45: 12.

in design, and under farmers' organizations, those associations whose chief function is to settle questions which concern the farmer as a business man and a citizen."[1]

The Church assumes no temporal authority as lord of the parish, but is rather the heart, supplying the life-blood of the gospel to every member and inspiring the activities of moral and social progress. The chief function of the Church is to impress the truths of Christianity upon the life of the people and to infuse the principles of the gospel into every popular movement. The function of the Church is inspirational.

A Doctrinal Center

In accomplishing this office the Church acts an important part as religious teacher. Christianity is both doctrinal and practical, a creed and a life. To hold it merely as a creed is bigotry; to hold it merely as a life, ignoring its doctrinal basis, is a form of thoughtless mysticism. If Christianity is to influence effectively the home and the community, as well as the individual, it must be established on a clear doctrinal basis. As a

[1] "Can Rural Forces Be Federated? A First Step," *Review of Reviews*, April, 1902.

community thinketh in its heart, so is it. The life of the community depends upon the teachings of its Church. The Church is responsible for teaching to the people of its community the fundamental truths and principles of the Christian faith. The local Church is charged with the responsibility of enlightening every home within the bounds of its parish. The teaching of the Church must be clear in regard to the being of God, His holiness, justice, goodness, and truth; Jesus Christ the Son of God, and the Holy Spirit a divine person; the Bible as the inspired Word of God, the only rule of faith and life; man's state of sin and his need of redemption; the free and unconditional gospel offer of salvation through Jesus Christ; the efficacy of prayer, the obligation of obedience and similar truths revealed in the Bible.

Practical Life

The New Testament epistles, which are most elaborate in their doctrinal discussions, are also intensely practical. Certain practical results in daily social relations arise from the belief of an individual or a Church or a community. The natural practical results which follow the faithful teaching of the great truths of the

gospel are the sense of personal obligation to God and the necessity of a personal surrender to God; the devotion of time and service to the Kingdom of God. The practical teachings of Christianity applied to the social life of the community require business integrity, education, culture, courtesy, neighborliness, cooperation, and civic activity.

To apply these principles specifically to the subject with which we are dealing, it follows that in order to perform its proper function in the community, the country church is responsible for the maintenance of regular public worship and the preaching of the gospel. "The Church is the community worshiping, and when the worship of the people is efficiently maintained, an essential function is discharged, and one organ of society does its proper work."[1]

Maintaining Public Worship

Yet it is not enough that the doors of the church are open, that the church-bell sends forth its solemn call to all the people at the time of prayer, and that an inspiring and helpful service is supplied for all who attend, but the Church is responsible for the personal offer of salvation to the people who,

[1] "The Country Town" (Anderson), page 298.

through indifference or prejudice, do not attend the church services.

The Church is also charged with preserving a kindly, helpful, and neighborly sentiment in the community, a social feeling that will not permit the fracture of the neighborhood into cliques and castes.

A Social Feeling

It must give to each home a place and a welcome in the sanctuary. It is a beautiful courtesy which provides ushers who meet at the door the worshipers as they come and give them a hearty hand-shake and see them comfortably seated.

It is also the duty of the Church to render to every person in the community assistance in the regular study of the Bible. This obligation is met in part by the Sabbath-school and the mid-week meeting. A well-organized home department, including in its membership every person who does not attend the main school, is an effective means for the accomplishment of this purpose.

Bible Study

In almost every community there are "shut-ins" who value the efforts of pastor and people to bring to their homes the blessings of worship and service.

There are also certain "shut-outs" who, by the memory of some real or fancied unkindness, some slight or inattention, some old family grudge or neighborhood feud, have been led to shut themselves out from the privileges of the house of God.

In a special way, the Church is responsible for the social life of the parish. It rests upon the rock elements in human society; it is founded upon the good, the true and the beautiful in society. It has a vital relation to the pleasures and enjoyments of the people, young and old. The Church may not become so highly socialized that it can not maintain its peculiar office as the spiritual center of the community; it may not become a mere social club, yet it should regard the social life of the community as an important sphere of service.

Social Service

IV

SPIRITUALITY IN THE COUNTRY CHURCH

IN considering the problems of rural life, the place of the Church should not be exalted above measure, but it should be accorded its true rank. It is "the pillar and ground of the truth," and it may not abandon itself to social life while neglecting the weightier matters of spiritual and eternal interest. It is too often assumed that the success of the Church depends upon its organization, finance, methods, and earnestness. As first organized among the "men of Galilee," the Church was a spiritual force above all else.[1] The modern rural church must be, first of all, a spiritual force in its own community. Its message is essentially spiritual whatever methods it may use to convey it. The simple virtues of faith and godliness in the Church contain the secret of all successful

A Spiritual Force

[1] In chapters which follow, the importance of organization, finance, and methods is presented.

efforts to redeem the country and the city and the world.

If the Church is regarded as a social institution merely, the true purpose of its existence is lost, and its place in human life is misunderstood. A merely sociable Church is dead, as a Church, whatever it may be as a social organization. The cleansing and awakening of society depend upon the awakening of conscience and the quickening of the moral impulses. If the waters of social life are to be healed it must be by "a new cruse with salt therein"; a renewed Church endued with spiritual power. It must be a vessel fit for the Master's use. Other institutions may depend upon the wisdom of their leaders, the strength of their laws, or their financial resources, but the Church lives in a sphere of activity far removed from these securities and must have a spiritual endowment in order to accomplish its mission.

The Supremacy of Religion

Spirituality is that quality of heart which enables its possessor to perceive the reality of unseen and eternal things; it "seeks first the Kingdom of God." An eminent student of missions has recently lamented the "decay of the prayer spirit," and that "the eyes of men

seem turned away from the supernatural sources of power."[1]

Another has said: "The supremacy of religion has too largely departed from the churches, and, until it is restored, the churches, whatever else they may or may not have, will be suffering their greatest possible loss."[2] The temptation is to attribute power to the "wind," and the "earthquake," and the "fire," while the "still small voice" is ignored.

A truly spiritual Church must give attention to the machinery of organization, but it must seek first the kingdom of prayer and devotion. Methods of work must be subordinated to the spiritual forces of the Church. Pure doctrine, brotherly love, believing prayer, and noble living are the cardinal virtues of the Church. All social plans must be sanctified by the spirit of devotion to religion.

The Farm and Soul Culture

The conditions of country life are fitted to develop the spiritual faculties. The isolation of the farm has this compensation, that it gives the farmer time to think, and meditation gives a culture to the soul which can not

[1] Dr. A. T. Pierson, in *The Record of Christian Work*, December, 1908.

[2] Rev. Geo. F. Wells, in *The Bibliotheca Sacra*, April, 1907.

be learned from books. Even in these days of newspapers and general communication, the country people are somewhat protected by their seclusion from the flippant distractions which prevail in the cities. There still remains in the rural parishes a primitive reverence which distinguishes them from other fields of Christian service.

The farmer can not now live to himself. Horace Bushnell crystallized in literature "the age of home-spun" which existed a hundred years ago. Each community, and even each home, was a unit within itself and produced the simple necessities of the home life without dependence on the outside world. But the "new farmer" is connected with his neighbors and the world through many avenues. The quiet rural life, so fitted to the development of spirituality, is brought perilously into contact with the spirit of the age which glorifies human advancement and science, and expects a "machine-made millennium." There is little danger that rural churches will be overloaded with sociology, but some students of sociology may overload rural-life problems with social theories which ignore the greatest need of our churches.

A recent investigation of the country church and its problems is summed up in these words:

"At the center of the cause of the social problem of the rural church is the loss of faith on the part of the people, not in the doctrine or theology of the church primarily, but in the life of the Church. The Church fails through lack of integrity to its Christian profession and moral mission, as exprest in personal honor, brotherhood and essential charity."[1]

The Point of Failure

The awakening of the churches in the rural districts can not be expected apart from a general awakening and revival of the whole Church. A deepened spirituality is the great need in the presence of the serious problems which confront the Church and the nation. There is promise of such a universal quickening in the present movements for civic righteousness; in the longing of the churches for a revival, the spirit of cooperation and federation, increasing interest in the study of the Bible, the increase of prayer, and manifestations of spiritual power. There is hope, also, in the sincere efforts now being

Hope of a General Awakening

[1] Rev. George F. Wells, in *The Outlook*, August 18, 1906.

made to awaken interest in the rural churches as the most important element of the new country life.

As a wise propaganda in the interests of the uplift of rural life extends to the country churches, their sense of responsibility will increase and they will seek more earnestly to develop that vital godliness which is essential to the accomplishment of the mission of the country church.

V

"THE NEGLECTED HALF"

THE responsibility of the Church in social service may well be emphasized. The term social service is defined as service for the good of humanity; or the effort to make men fit to live in society, to make the world more fit for human habitation, and to help men enjoy the good of life.

"Social Service"

There is a popular impression that the world itself is competent for this task, that the world is naturally "falling upward" through the progress of the ages, and that in the process of a few years, a gigantic social combination will develop and apply all modern inventions, discoveries, and constructive skill to social life for the good of the race; that the whole world will be brought into instant communication by means of the teleview and telephone, operated on a wireless system; that man will have mastered aerial navigation and the continents will be separated by only a few hours of

A Self-made World

air-sailing; that some form of radial motor will supply power everywhere and make it as cheap as sunlight; and that disease will be banished through the triumph of science, and crime likewise.

But, altho science and human skill are accomplishing wonderful things in the advancement of man's conquest of the material world, this advancement has been possible only through the quickening power of Christianity. The beginning of civilization is coincident with Christianity, and as Christianity has extended in its influence, civilization and science have advanced. It has been the inspirational force behind the material progress of the world.

An Inspirational Force

Yet the Church has not always acted in harmony with the spirit of progress inspired by the great religion committed to its care. While the great truths of Christianity have always operated for enlightenment and liberty, the Church has, not infrequently, in the past, lagged in the rear or resisted the onward march of the race. But the Church seems to understand the nature and scope of its great commission as never before, and is, in these days, meeting the task of bringing the blessings of

the gospel to all people; comprehending, with a new vision, the power of the gospel to help men in their personal and social lives. There has been a progress and a development in the Church. It has grown to the broad modern conception of its relation and responsibility to the world by progressive steps, and now occupies the highest ground it has ever held. The late Dr. George E. Post once said: "The past of the Christian Church has been an age of creeds; the present is an age of deeds. In the past we have been discovering what we were to believe concerning God. In the future we are to find out what duty God requires of man. The past has been an age of strife; the future is to be an age of life."

Jesus in Social Service

Social service has been called "the neglected half" of the mission of the Church. Social service is not a modern fad—not a product of social philosophy imported into religious methods. It is an essential principle of Christianity, exemplified most fully in the life of Jesus Himself.

In the time of our Savior, the chief forms of social service that were practised among the Jews were hospitality and almsgiving. There were limi-

tations recognized in these obligations. Customs which regulated their alms and their hospitality did not require that a man should beggar himself for the benefit of the poor.[1] The law of Moses did not require them to give away all they had.[2] It was this recognized limit to the obligations of hospitality and charity that made the test of the young ruler seem too severe. Jesus applied to this worthy young man a theological test, and he stood the test. He then applied a social test which he was not able to bear, but went away sadly. Like this young nobleman, the Church in the past has been strong on theology, but has failed to meet the social-service test—the neglected half of its mission. The words of our Lord to the rich young man apply with fitting force to the Church to-day, "One thing thou lackest."

"One Thing Thou Lackest"

A large part of the life of Jesus was taken up in active service for the good of men; in social service that far exceeded the limits of the customary charities of that time. "He went about doing good." He labored even to weariness in teaching, and helping, and healing. A large part of the gospel record

[1] 2 Cor., 8: 13. [2] Lev., 19: 9, 10.

might be marked as social service. And this is the service which He recommended to His disciples, "Ye are the salt of the earth"; "Ye are the light of the world"; "Freely ye have received; freely give."

In the Early Church

In the warmth of spiritual life which prevailed in the primitive Church, social service held a high place. Converts came voluntarily and laid all their possessions at the feet of the apostles, to be by them distributed to the poor. They "had all things common." Throughout the history of the Church in apostolic times, the people readily responded to calls to help the poor.

The work of Jesus and His apostles in standing for righteousness, rebuking injustice, oppression, and wrong, and in proclaiming, as the mission of the gospel, the regeneration of human society, justifies the broad application of Christianity to the social problems of our day.

In the Great Awakenings

It is also worthy of note, that in every marked revival of religion recorded in the history of the Church, there has been a revival of social service.

When the Reformation was received by Switzerland, the application of Christian principles to society was at once manifested. "At Berne, gambling, drinking, and dancing, and all unbecoming dress were forbidden by proclamation. Houses of ill fame were destroyed. A consistory was appointed to watch over public morals. The poor were received into the Dominican cloister, and the convent of the island was devoted to the same purpose."[1]

The Reformation

Calvin led the Church in a "war on vice" in the city of Geneva with such remarkable results that when John Knox visited the city, he wrote to a friend:

"I neither fear nor am ashamed to say it is the most perfect school of Christ in the earth since the days of the apostles. In other places, I confess, Christ is truly preached; but manners and religion so sincerely reformed, I have not seen in any place beside."[2]

Methodism

The Methodist movement in England began in this spirit of social service. Early

[1] D'Aubigné's "History of the Reformation" (Religious Tract Society), vol. iv., page 295.

[2] Walker's "John Calvin," page 377.

in their first century the Methodists were engaged in work among prisoners in France and England. John Wesley led in work among the poor and sick. He stood for freedom, temperance, education, and the relief of destitution and affliction. He encouraged cleanliness, thrift, and economy."[1]

"The Inner Mission"

Speaking of the origin of the inner mission of the German Church, a writer in the *American Journal of Sociology,* says: "As the Lutheran reformation began with the republication of the Bible, so this revival of social beneficence was closely connected with the larger circulation of the inspiring Book."[2]

The Problems of Our Day

These illustrations from the work of Jesus and the apostles, and from the history of the Church, show that social service is an essential part of the gospel, and we must not shrink from the wider application of the principles which this day is demanding. While social service has always constituted an essential element of Christianity, its importance has been obscured by the strifes of sects and selfish controversies.

[1] "Encyclopedia of Missions," art., "Medical Missions."
[2] "Church Federation," 1905, page 513.

As civilization has advanced, social problems have become more complex, and the Church is now awakening to the importance of this long-neglected mission and is advancing, in all its departments, to the highest point of efficiency as a social factor.

A variety of causes contribute to make social problems of great importance in our day. The attention of States and nations is directed to the betterment of social conditions. We have boards of health, associated charities, infirmaries, hospitals, efforts to combat deadly diseases and to improve sanitary conditions in city and country, to suppress vice and vagrancy, and to improve the material, moral, physical, and intellectual conditions of the people everywhere. In harmony with these modern movements, the Church is actively engaging in service for the common good.

The Country Church and Social Problems

Many of these problems concern the city; but the country has its problems and is in many ways connected with the social problems of the city. The Church in the country should be organized for social service in its own community. The spirit of social service is even more important than organization. Yet, if the

spirit of such service exists, definite organization will follow as the natural expression of that spirit.

A country church, at least, must have no aristocracy. Class distinctions have no place in it, however unavoidable they may be in the city church.

In the country the Church meets all classes on a level. Cliques and clans destroy its spiritual power.

The Clique in the Church

A prevailing Scotch element in a church may make the Scotch burr a barrier against the non-Scotch of the community and so destroy it as a social and spiritual factor.

Country churches are often under the control of a clique of selfish people; sometimes the aristocracy of original settlers stands aloof from the class of transient dwellers and renters who have come into the neighborhood, and thus classes grow up in the community to the injury of the work of the Church. Where this clannishness exists in a church, little can be accomplished in applying the gospel to the homes

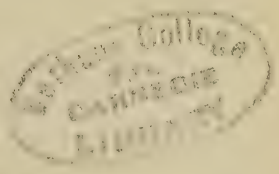
A Revolution Needed

of the community. Even zeal for foreign missions can not atone for a narrow, unsocial spirit in the Church. The Church should not only "maintain the ordinances" for the benefit of those who appreciate the privileges of the

Church, but it should take as its motto, "The Church for the community, and all the community in the Church." It will require a spiritual and social revolution in many communities to convince the people that the purpose of the Church in their midst is to serve the people in their best interests, to strengthen and beautify home life, to develop manhood and womanhood, and to comfort, encourage, and help all the families of the parish and to cooperate in every helpful movement.

One of the most disheartening conditions of a country pastor's work is the presence of a large number of people in the community who are indifferent to the offer of the gospel and the call of the Church. No doubt selfish natural depravity will account for much of this indifference, yet it can not be denied that the Church, through its narrow, unsocial life, and its limited view of its own mission and possibilities, must bear a share of responsibility for these conditions. If the country church is to meet the responsibility of winning the people to the love of the Church and the gospel, there must be a revival of old-fashioned sociability. We may never return to

Revival of Sociability Needed



those customs of frontier life, when families drove to their neighbors without invitation on the one hand or announcement on the other, and spent the day with a hearty disregard for ceremonies. If we can not return to that old-time hospitality, we must have something to take its place. The Women's Missionary Society and Ladies' Aid supply this need, in a partial way, in some congregations. They are often very successful in bringing homes into touch with the Church in those communities in which they are active. But there is generally need of a system of social visiting. No family, coming into the community as strangers, should be left for months without receiving social calls from many members of the Church. The pastor may call on a family ten times and may still fail to draw its members to the Church, but if ten Christian people of the Church should call, they will probably win them to the gospel. Let us revise the old saying, "A home-going pastor makes a church-going people." It is really a home-going church that makes a church-going people.

The pastor is held responsible if there are homes in the community that are neglected. Even persons

who never make calls for social or religious reasons blame the pastor if there are homes which he never visits. Yet the most faithful and systematic pastoral visiting does not atone for the neglect of social duties by the people. **Neglected Homes**

Let the pastor prepare a list of homes which he believes are thus neglected, and let him ask those whom he regards as most suitable for the different homes on his list to call. Or he may hand the list to the president of the Women's Missionary Society, or the Young People's Society, with the request that these homes be looked after in an unostentatious way. The callers should make these visits merely as social visits, with a sincere desire to cultivate sociability, and without the formalism of an appointed visit for Church purposes. If a sufficient number of men and women and young people are enlisted in this sociability crusade, the social reach of the Church can be very much extended in a single twelvemonth. The callers should report to the pastor. The results will soon be apparent in the pleasure brought to many homes which might otherwise be overlooked. This revival of sociability can not be made most effective if it is confined to the visiting of the

neglected homes; it should include the homes of members and non-church-goers alike in a crusade for sociability. Sociability is one of the great needs of the country church. It is the simplest and, at the same time, the most efficient form of social service.

A card similar to the following will be a convenience to the pastor and the callers:

SOCIABILITY CALL

M.....

Please call on.....and report to me on reverse side of this card by..... 19.....

Make this a neighborly call. Take sunshine with you. Endeavor to lead the conversation away from distressing affairs to things good and helpful.

Date.....

.....Pastor.

On the reverse side of the card is a blank for the caller's report, as follows:

REPORT

Date of call.....
Members of family present.....
Did you invite to church?.....
Did you invite to Sabbath School?.....
Did you talk Home Department?.....
Remarks .....
.....
.....
.....
.....

This extension of sociability is the spirit of social service in the neighborhood. The method of applying the principles of social service in the practical work of the Church will be considered in the following chapter.

VI

INSTITUTIONAL METHODS IN THE COUNTRY CHURCH

"THE Year Book of Grace Church and Parish" gives account of a type of Christian service that is an essential factor of the activities of a great city. There are many people in the cities who are practically homeless; men and women who live in hotels and boarding-houses and in the streets. The saloons and play-houses appeal to these with offers of relaxation and entertainment. The solicitations of vicious institutions attract great numbers into the perilous gates and devious ways of death. The Church, with heart of love, comes into the midst of the thronging, restless masses of the city and establishes the institutional Church to win and save them from the baneful influences that surround them, and to enrich their lives with the beauty of Christian culture.

The Institutional Church

The institutional Church is meeting various needs of city life and ministering in many ways to the

spiritual service of the people. With a building, or buildings, suitably prepared for the purpose, it supplies lectures, entertainments, library, reading-room, gymnasium, medical dispensary, day nursery, night-school classes, and special-study courses, settlement and deaconess work and other forms of helpful service. By every method which a watchful, evangelical, and loving Christianity can devise, the institutional Church endeavors to help and to save.

In the Midst of the City

But the institutional Church belongs to the city. Its elaborate organization can not be applied to work in the country. It would be folly to transfer the institutional Church from the city to the country, and to attempt to deal with rural problems on the basis of urban conditions. While the institutional Church, as thus understood, may not be established in the open country districts, or even in rural villages, the institutional method may be applied to any church. Every church which offers to the community the means of social and intellectual improvement, which engages in the benevolent service of the community, and takes an active part in reform movements, uses the in-

Its Limitations

stitutional method, altho it may not claim the dignity of an institutional church. Church work which ministers to the social, intellectual, moral, and physical welfare of the community, as well as to its spiritual good, is institutional in its method.

In applying these methods to Church work in the country, the rights and sphere of the home should be regarded. The institutional Church in the city attempts to supply the place of the home to those who are practically homeless. The Church in the country should not presume to make itself a substitute for the home. Even institutional methods have this limitation in the work of the country church. Our country homes are not ideal; many of them are unattractive and unwholesome in their moral and social life, low in their intellectual ideals, and squalid in their physical condition. The Church should have no ambition to be more than an inspirational force to the home.

The Rights of the Home

In the equipment of a country church for social service, a parish-house is an important feature. In general, a parish-house is a building or hall properly fitted and furnished, and under the control of the Church, to be used for the good of the Church and

community. Such a building is an asset of power to the Church. It ministers to the community and enables the Church to discharge its duties in reference to the social needs of the people. It increases the social power of the Church and supplies a place for social gatherings that is superior to any public hall, because it is under the care of the Church.

A Parish House

There is no more serious problem for many of our country communities than the loafing habits of men and boys. Where a saloon exists, it is the country gentlemen's club. In dry territory, the country store at the "Corners," or some resort in town, furnishes the social meeting-place for men. The Church does not free itself from responsibility by an expression of disgust for the loafing habit. It is disgusting, indeed, and has no ground of defense. But it is the plain duty of the Church to make some provision for the elevating entertainment of these men and boys, and to appeal to them with something that will counteract the evil influences of unregulated loafing. The Church should most seriously discuss the provision of some means by which men can meet together without the

A Reading Room

degrading influences of loafing. A reading-room supplied with helpful books and papers, furnishing games and other amusements, under liberal but careful regulations, would carry the war into the enemy's camp and give to the Church facilities for the direction of the thoughts of men in their idle hours.

The Church in the country has special opportunity for social work. In the cities there are many social institutions other than the Church, which are generally of a helpful character. The churches in cities are relieved of the social burden of providing for the preference men have for associations of men, by the existence of clubs, orders, unions, the Y. M. C. A., and other organizations. But in the country, the Church is in a special degree responsible for the supply of a social meeting-place for men. In a masterful way the Church must at least inspire the social instincts of the men and boys. If these social instincts are allowed to find expression without the inspiration of the Church, they will result in groups of loafers, social cliques, or a multiplicity of secret orders. Such things may exist in the city without any marked effect on the social life.

Social Responsibility of the Country Church

Life in the city is composed of many classes and circles within circles. But, in the country, social life is a unit. When the country community is composed of cliques and groups and independent associations, the whole fabric of rural society is injured.

The preference men have for association with men is a fact which should not be overlooked in the study of the problems of the Church and society. The lodge-room, the club, the saloon, and the "corner grocery" have their peculiar fascination for men because there they find a company of men. In very many country communities this is the neglected element of the forces latent in human nature which the Church might use for the good of all.

A generation ago there did not seem to be a "boy problem." Perhaps we would not be troubled so much with the "man problem" if the fathers had given more attention to the boy. The present popularity of the study of boy nature, the establishment of juvenile courts, the special investigations of sociologists, the popular lectures and books on the subject, the excellent books and periodicals published especially for boys, and the special attention given to boys by educators, minis-

The "Boy Problem"

ters, and Sabbath-school workers, all encourage us to hope that the boy is to have his inning now.

Some one calls the boy "the finest specimen of the universe." If Emerson were living to-day, he must have said that the boy is "nature's masterpiece." And the boy is at his best in the country. The air, the sunlight, the woods, and the fields fill the cup of his buoyant life. Admitting that the boy is subject to that total depravity which has made a heaven-wrought redemption necessary, there are fine qualities in the boy nature upon which God's grace may build a noble manhood.

Many grown people regard the boy's activity as his most grievous sin. Boys are thoughtless, impulsive, irreverent, disobedient, and even bad. But there are good impulses even in a bad boy—good qualities which may be touched with heavenly power to make the boy a loyal member of the kingdom.

While boys may be instructed in the Sabbath-school class and in friendly, frank talks, there are many indirect methods which must be used in dealing with country boys. The Christian worker in dealing with boys must enter into sympathetic touch with them in their amusements and recreations and

in their work. It is no waste of time to wander with them through fields and woods, but often results in a gain of influence over their lives. The inspirational effect of such interest well repays the effort. It is essential that the interest be genuine and hearty. Boys will not be drawn to a pastor who drags himself reluctantly from his books and sermons, and under a sense of duty props himself against a fence to watch a ball-game.

In applying the indirect or institutional methods to work for boys, each field requires a special study and each pastor should discover his own best line of action. Some churches have successfully organized the boys into companies for military drill. If the pastor or an earnest Christian layman possesses the proper qualifications and knowledge to organize and drill a military club, it gives the boys a fine training. But a man without a military instinct or experience might make a failure of such an attempt.

Boys' Brigade

A man who has musical gifts and training can often succeed in organizing the young people into a choral class, or select a number of boys and form an orchestra or a brass

Music

band. It is a fortunate church which possesses one or more Christian workers having such talents to bring to the service of the kingdom.

A pastor who is "handy with tools" may readily interest his boys in some form of manual training work. The mechanical faculty is almost universal with boys, and is not an uncommon faculty among ministers. Some Christian carpenter or other person accustomed to using tools may give help in teaching the use and care of them. If the school does not have a library including arts and crafts, the Church library should have such a department. Many farmers have good workshops and tools on their farms, and most of the farmer boys are acquainted with the use of tools. This would make it comparatively easy to awaken an interest and rivalry in the art of making things.

Arts-Crafts

Allied to the use of the mechanical faculty as a means of interesting boys is the printing-press. In some churches pastors have found the press the key to the situation. There is a fascination in the use of type. A country printing-office has been the first inspiration of many great literary careers. At little cost a small outfit can be

Printing

purchased and the boys will be interested in it from the first. Without having experience as a practical printer, one can soon learn to do creditable work with a small press and an assortment of type. When the pastor proposes to the boys that they "print a paper," he has gript them. Boys who have been regarded as confirmed loafers develop a love for typesetting and may become quite expert in a little while. Other boys and young people may be enlisted in the work. The boys may be entrusted with the mechanical part of the work, the Young People's Society may be responsible for the subscription list and collecting items of news, the Missionary Society may furnish missionary notes, freshly edited, and other departments may be given into the hands of other organizations of the Church. The printing outfit will be a useful assistant in many ways and the boys feel themselves an essential factor in the work of the Church and are stimulated to worthy ambition.

A Newspaper

The aim of the Church is to develop Christian manhood; the aim of the country church is to develop Christian manhood for farm life, and the country church which teaches its young people the

doctrines of Christianity, but neglects to inspire them with a love for farming and for country life accomplishes only part of its mission. The Church should unite heartily in the movement for agricultural instruction in the rural schools. If this instruction is not given in the school the young people may be put into communication with the agricultural department of the State university. In this way they will receive advice and instruction from bulletins specially prepared for young people. From these they will learn many interesting things about soils, seeds, crops, and methods of cultivation. The church library and reading-room should have a good assortment of books and periodicals on country life and nature study. These themes should be presented in lectures, entertainments, and sermons, and a sanctified enthusiasm for the farm should be aroused.

Love of Country Life

If any one should question the application of the description to the boy, no one will doubt that the girl is "nature's masterpiece." The problem of influencing girls and training them to Christian life and service is different from the problem of the boy. Girls are not usually

The Girl Problem

in danger of acquiring habits of the grosser forms of evil that boys learn so easily. By custom and conditions of society, country girls living in respectable homes are protected from the danger of acquiring the habit of smoking, or swearing, or drinking. The temptations and snares of girl-life are more subtle. The Church that can not see any boy problem is still less disposed to seriously consider the girl problem. Girls are easily held in the Sabbath-school and are interested in the work and are not distracted by outside things so quickly as boys. But wise and sympathetic efforts are as necessary in their case as in the case of boys. They should be studied and a wise training in the Church should supplement wise training in the home. They should be trained for the home; motherhood should be honored in their training. We may learn from Oriental lands the sacredness of motherhood. As a nation we are greatly at fault in our treatment of the principles which constitute the foundation of the home. We are horrified at the seclusion of women in Oriental lands; yet we permit the liberties of the American courting system, make marriage the subject of jest and gibe, teach our girls that their chief aim in life should be to make themselves at-

tractive, smother with prudish delicacy the instincts of motherhood, and thus, in our very homes, by ignorance, false modesty, and wrong ideals, lay the foundations of "race suicide" and the "white slave traffic." The homely ideals, instincts, and ambitions should be cultivated. The Christian leaders of the Church should cooperate with the homes in the effort to inspire right views of life and womanhood. To this end the library should have a selection of wholesome, helpful books for girls.

The heart of the problem of institutional or indirect methods of Christian work is thus stated: "The pastor who succeeds in a hard country parish to-day in bringing into the Church new members, and in elevating the standard of morality and Christian living in the community, must be able to secure the interest and cooperation of those whom he wishes to reach in some kind of work not strictly religious."[1]

"Work not Strictly Religious

There are notable instances, in various parts of the land, in which these methods have been in use for years, and have proved effective in the work of churches in rural districts.

[1] "Institutional Work for the Country Church," page 31. (Hayward.)

VII

RURAL EVANGELISM

EVANGELISM is the effort of the Church to bring the gospel to the knowledge of sinful men, and to persuade them to accept it as their only salvation. The object of evangelism is the glory of God in the salvation of sinners and the regeneration of society. Evangelism may be said to be of two kinds, general and special.

General evangelism includes all the ordinary efforts of the Church to impress the gospel upon the hearts of men by means of its regular public worship, preaching and teaching; by the lives and efforts of its members, and by the distribution of evangelical literature. These ordinary efforts are made effective by the united service of all, and furnish opportunity to the humblest believer to do effective work for the establishment of the gospel and the advancement of the kingdom.

General Evangelism

This work may be accomplished by asking people to attend church services, by teaching in the Sabbath-school, by consistent, honorable Christian living, and by direct personal work in endeavoring to bring souls to a confession of Christ. The quiet invitation of a humble Christian to his neighbor to "come and hear our preacher," or to "join our Sabbath-school class," has been, in many cases, the means of opening hearts and homes to the blessings of the gospel.

Preaching

The ordinary preaching of the gospel is a power for evangelization which can not be measured. Daniel Webster said, "Tho we live in a reading age, and in a reading community, yet the preaching of the gospel is the form in which human agency has been and still is most efficaciously employed for the spiritual improvement of men."

On the same subject, the following words of J. G. Holland are fitted to impress us with the great importance of the preaching service. He said, "For years I have attended the ministrations of the house of God on the Sabbath, and tho my pursuits are literary, I tell you I have received, through all these years, more intellectual nourishment and stimulus

from the pulpit than from all other sources combined."

Such testimony emphasizes the importance of the regular preaching service to the community.

In addition to the public form of evangelism, in the stated meetings of the Church for worship, the personal life and loving appeal of Christians is a force of immeasurable value. The neighborliness which still lingers in most of our rural communities, ministering in times of sickness and distress, operates as a means to draw neighbors together and to the gospel. The isolation of rural communities brings the people of these communities into closer relations and opens opportunities for the converse of soul with soul.

The Personal Element

Special evangelism includes those extraordinary or special efforts of the Church in series of meetings, organized, and systematic work, and united prayer to revive the spirituality of the Church and to awaken the unconverted.

Special Evangelism

An article recently published is entitled "The Passing of the Revival." Some years ago an article was published under the title "The Passing of the Country Church."

But both these institutions have good reasons for their existence still.

There are features of "revival work" that may well "pass." Dr. A. T. Pierson recently wrote on this subject, deploring the presence of these objec-

Present-day Evangelism

tionable features with the comment that "a present type of evangelism is attended with extensive organization, elaborate preparations, expensive outlay, studied notoriety, display of statistics, newspaper advertising and systematic puffing, spectacular sensationalism, dramatic novelties, and sometimes doubtful complications with secular and political issues." But these objections do not apply generally to present-day evangelism in the country churches. The methods best adapted to the evangelistic work of the country church are not "the hypnotic influences of great crowds and the personal fame of the evangelist." The meetings are often conducted by the pastor himself, sometimes with the assistance of neighboring pastors, or an evangelist with more to recommend him than zeal and clap-trap methods.

Special "revival services" are of great use in the country. Evangelistic meetings attract attention in

the country without any special advertisement. Many people who are never seen in the regular weekly meetings of the Church go to the evangelistic meetings night after night for weeks together, even when these meetings are conducted in a quiet, sane manner, without excitement or sensationalism to draw the crowd. A series of evangelistic meetings in the country secures that "arrest of thought" which widens opportunity for personal work and calls men to a decision who do not hear the call of the regular ministrations of the Church. A small mission church in the city may hold special services for weeks without attracting attention beyond the narrow circle of its influence. The same effort made by a country church will often arouse the whole country-side.

Evangelistic Services

There are times in the year when the farmers must give their undivided attention to their crops. Special meetings, requiring attendance every day, and perhaps twice a day, would be out of season in such busy times. There is work for the farmer all the year round. But there are periods when farm work does not demand so imperiously all the time of the farmer. At such seasons the

In Season

country people are free to give time and attention to special religious efforts. These are the harvest seasons for the Church in the country, and meetings arranged at these convenient seasons, and carried on under wise leadership, and in a prayerful spirit, will result in permanent good to the Church and the community.

More than half of the rural population do not attend church. Many farmers will have nothing to do with the Church, but criticize it and its members.

Neglect of the Church

The common charges against the Church are too true. But a large number of those who exclaim against the faults of the Church are themselves neglecting their own spiritual nature through sheer ignorance, prejudice, or moral obliquity. While sharing the benefits which are admitted to come to the community through the presence of the Church, they seem incapable of comprehending the high calling in the gospel to which the Church invites them. With church-doors open and church-bells ringing in their ears, they hold on to their narrow, selfish ways, with no inclination to, or time for, the service of the Lord. We are not ready for the "passing of the revival" so long as

those who neglect the Church may be induced to attend these meetings. These successive awakenings extend the knowledge of the gospel into new homes in the course of years, and the community is gradually permeated with the saving truth.

Too many churches, it is true, expend their energies in spasmodic revivals without regard to means of securing permanent results by the development of true ethical standards in personal and social life.

The mission of the Church is the building of manhood to the glory of God, and this can not be accomplished if the Church expends its energies in periodically "getting up a revival." In order to reap the full fruit of evangelism, the Church must enlist all its members, including its latest converts, in helpful benevolence, philanthropy, and reform, as well as earnest Bible study and prayer-filled service for the conversion of souls.

After the Revival

VIII

THE REENFORCEMENT OF CHARACTER IN THE COUNTRY

ENVIRONMENT does not make character. Character fits itself to environment. The lone tree on the prairie is more deeply rooted and stronger than a tree of the same kind, size, and age which grows in the midst of a protecting forest. The man who is accustomed to meet and overcome temptation is stronger, morally, than one who is so protected by his surroundings that he is never required to meet trial or temptation. This law of life is universally recognized in the common sayings of the people, as well as in the technical language of the scientists. While it is true that the leaders in Church and civil life in the cities have been trained in the country, it is also well known that a very large number of young people who pass from the country to the city become submerged in the perils of the city and fill its "homes of horrid cruelty and crime."

Character

Some persons thoughtlessly discredit strict religious training in the home on the theory that there will come a reaction. It is supposed that children trained strictly in the home will run to excess of evil when they find themselves at liberty. Tyranny and injustice might produce such a result, but wise and strict religious education can not be judged by such a law. John G. Paton, describing the Sabbath evenings in the home of his childhood, where they had "Bible readings on the Lord's day evening" and "the Shorter Catechism was gone through regularly," says: "It has been an amazing thing to me, occasionally to meet with men who blamed this 'catechizing' for giving them a distaste to religion; every one in all our circle thinks and feels exactly the opposite. It laid the solid rock foundations of our religious life."[1] Many great and noble men have, in a similar manner, proved that strict and loving training in childhood is the best assurance of a beautiful and useful life.

Training in the Home

The city makes constant drafts on the life of the country. The employments, comforts, and excite-

[1] "John G. Paton, Missionary to the New Hebrides," First Part, page 24.

ments of the city appeal to the youth of the country. Many go for good reasons; but many others are allured by false ideas of the attractions of the city. The want ads of the city dailies appeal with flattering promises of great opportunities; the electric railway stations and country stores display flaming posters descriptive of the amusements of the city; and in many ways the "lure of the city" is extending into the rural places of the land.

"The Lure of the City"

It would be a thankless task to attempt to make the rural population a fixture. There is an inevitable flow of population toward the city. If the stream of clean, strong people from the country to the city were cut off, the cities would rot with their own corruption. Many city churches would be swamped in a short time if they were not reenforced by constant additions from the country. The safety of our nation, as well as our cities, depends upon the training of a sterling manhood in the country. President Roosevelt, in his special message to Congress on the report of the Country Life Commission, uses these weighty words at the close, "We need the development of men in the open country, who will

be, in the future, as in the past, the stay and strength of the nation in time of war, and its guiding and controlling spirit in time of peace."[1] Altho not the chief aim of the training of men and women in the country, an important service is rendered to the whole nation in the supply of persons trained in the country and fitted for the stress of life in the larger world. Character must be reenforced in the country for the days when those who are under the discipline of the forces operating quietly and powerfully in our rural communities are called to the world's service in other fields, to "endure the terrific strain of modern life."[2]

The Country Trains for City Strain

It is important that every effort should be made to train boys and girls to be clean and pure, to love nature, and to be loyal to country life; to cherish an ambition to accomplish their highest ideals on the farm and in their own neighborhood. A country pastor said recently to the writer, "The city must have our boys and girls from the country, but let

[1] "Report of the Country Life Commission," page 10.

[2] The same. This report has been printed for free distribution by the Chamber of Commerce, Spokane, Washington.

us so improve conditions of life in the country that it will be harder for the city to get them."

The Church may perform a great service in co-operation with the home by aiding in making the social life of the home and the community attractive, and strengthening the religious and moral character of the youth. The comforts, associations, and amusements which aid in making the home and the home neighborhood places of strong attachment in the affections of children operate as powerful motives in the development of ties and influences which are lasting.

With the Church and the home in accord and performing their respective offices, their forces unite to fortify character and reenforce the manhood and womanhood of the country to bear the severe tension of modern life.

Family Worship

A family altar should be established in every home. Family worship is not so common as it was in Christian homes a generation ago. The conditions of present-day life are not favorable to the preservation of devotion in the home. The exactions of the varied employments in which both men and women are engaged, make it

more difficult to bring the whole family together morning and evening for worship. But the practise suffers less serious interruption in the country than in towns and cities. Our country life preserves so much of its original type that we can make no suitable apology for the passing of the family altar from the homes of our rural communities. The present organized movement to secure the more general observation of family worship is an encouraging prospect. The pastor should lead his Church in an effort to establish this important custom in every home. This long-established institution has exerted a powerful influence in the development of the lives of great and good men. True and vital godliness in the home is essential to the preservation of the strength and purity of our rural family life. Family worship is the natural expression of family religion and one of the strongest forces operating for the development and preservation of this vital godliness in the home.

The prayer-meeting is an important factor in the development of character. The mid-week meeting still holds its place in the devotions of the Church in spite of the increasing pressure of modern life. It

has been maintained, usually, in its true character as a meeting for prayer. It is too often taken for granted that the mid-week meeting is intended for the "old guard"—a secret conclave of past grand masters in Church life. On the contrary, it is the most democratic of our Church meetings, not excepting the Sabbath-school. And in that form commonly designated a "cottage" prayer-meeting, it is closely identified with the home.

The Prayer-Meeting

It is often difficult to maintain a prayer-meeting in the country. Sometimes distance and weather and bad roads present such obstacles that it is not attempted. In a large number of cases where it is neglected it might be found quite practicable. The cottage prayer-meeting is a special blessing to old people and others who may not be able to meet with the congregation in its regular worship in the Church. By special appointment, or in regular course, this meeting is held in these homes, and the worshiping company is, for the time, "the Church in the house." It is a social evangelizing agency. It often finds its way into the homes of people who do not attend Church, awakens their interest, brings them into

touch with the Church, and may lead to their uniting with the Church.

The chief function of the prayer-meeting is to express and strengthen the spiritual life of the Church and to utilize the force of united prayer for the benefit of the community and the advancement of the kingdom. When its true value is properly appreciated, it is seen to deal with vital elements of character. It can not be regarded as a force when it becomes a mere form. If a few old-fashioned people meet on Wednesday or Thursday evening because they have been accustomed to do so for, "lo, these many years," the prayer-meeting does not fulfil its highest mission. With proper views of the value of the mid-week meeting, it becomes an efficient means of strengthening Christian character.

Social Studies

As a means of broadening the foundations of life in the community and reenforcing the character of the youth with sound principles and safe knowledge, an acquaintance with the stern problems of social life in the cities, in the rural districts, and in foreign lands is of importance. Young people who have been made familiar with the woes of the drunkard, the struggles of the poor

in the cities, the problems of capital and labor and civic reform, are forearmed before they enter the city and the larger world, if they have received instructions in the social problems of the day. Young people thus trained to a systematic knowledge of these social conditions, when called in God's providence into the city, will not sink to the level of the "submerged tenth," but will be ranged on the side of those forces which work for righteousness. The prayer-meeting may be used for the presentation of suitable studies in sociology in the prayerful spirit of sympathy. Active participation in benevolent work by helping the needy in the neighborhood, or by sending food and clothing to the needy in the city; and by maintaining correspondence with the relief agencies existing in the nearest city, gives vital interest to these social studies.[1]

A practical method of deepening the interest of the people in social conditions is by arranging excursions to the nearby city under the direction of the Federation of Charities or some association

[1] "Studies in the Gospel of the Kingdom," by Dr. Josiah Strong, are suitable for prayer-meeting studies in Sociology. In the appendix of "Chapters in Rural Progress," by Pres. Kenyon L. Butterfield, an outline of Rural Sociology is given, which will be helpful to a leader in the study of Sociology.

dealing with the problems of the city. The officers of these associations will give assistance to the sympathetic investigations of representatives of a Church or young people's society or other organization from the country, and to those who live in the quiet and plenty of the country, such excursions reveal conditions which they would scarcely think possible.

Whenever possible the various forms of missionary, educational, and reform work should be presented to the Church and community by specialists engaged in the work; missionary secretaries, returned missionaries, representatives of reform and charitable organizations should be asked to present their respective fields of service as a means of broadening and deepening the knowledge and sympathies of the people.

The education of the children and young people with a view to the larger world must be conducted with diligence and watchfulness. Education in the fundamental doctrines of sound faith is of the greatest importance. There are fads and vagaries of a semi-religious nature which hold many people in the city under their strange spell. A country pastor may be thankful that these

Sound Doctrine

things do not prevail in his quiet parish. But even if there are no teachers of these strange cults in his community, he can not ignore the existence of these forms of thought. He should wisely endeavor to establish "the form of sound words" in the hearts of his people. He should impress upon their hearts and minds the truth fitted to counteract these errors without advertising the errors themselves. The thoughtful preacher does not array before his people the errors and heresies and cults of the day by continually referring to them, even to combat them. On the other hand, he teaches those positive principles which, when absorbed by the people, will constitute an anti-toxin of sound doctrine by which they will be rendered immune against the infection of error.

To train a people in the quiet of rural homes into nobility of life and to accomplish that reenforcement of character which will enable it to bear the stress when that "terrific strain of modern life" falls upon it in the larger sphere of municipal and public life, is a service which makes the work of the country church a magnificent task in these "times that try men's souls."

IX

THE COUNTRY SABBATH-SCHOOL

MANY great discoveries, inventions, and institutions which originated in the nineteenth century have powerfully and permanently affected human life. Within that century, steam-power, the telegraph, the sewing-machine, the friction match, the cotton-gin, the telephone, the phonograph, the electric motor, and other modern wonders wrought great benefit to the world. The future historian of the world's progress in the nineteenth century will name the Sabbath-school as one of the greatest developments of the century. Horace Bushnell called it "the greatest work in the world," and Henry Clay Trumbull said, "Toward the close of the eighteenth century, family and social life were at a low ebb, and religion seemed to be in a sad decline in both Great Britain and the United States. At this close of the nineteenth century, family and social life and religion

"The Greatest Work in the World"

in all its interests are at a higher point than ever before. For this glad change the agency of the Sunday-school is to be recognized as a potent factor beyond any other agency, not even excepting the family, the pulpit, or the press."[1]

The Pioneer of Federation

The present world-consciousness of brotherhood and the practical cooperation of progressive forces in the world may be traced to the influence of the Sabbath-school movement of the last century as one of the chief factors in their development. Other causes have aided in the development of the spirit of brotherhood, but the Sabbath-school has been a pioneer in Church comity and federation for social progress. The beginnings of the movement were in an age when churches were held apart by strenuous views of denominational importance. But the beginnings of this movement were interdenominational and cooperative. In an address at the seventy-fifth anniversary of the American Sunday-school Union, Mr. John H. Converse said, "In this movement, more than in any other, we have the development of what is called 'Church comity.'" The history of the Sabbath-

[1] *The Sunday-school Missionary*, June, 1899, page 69.

school shows that it has been an important part in the development of the present spirit of brotherhood and federation.

The simple organization of the Sabbath-school makes it peculiarly fitted for the special service it has rendered in the rural parts of our land. As a force for the evangelization of urban and rural life it is greater than it has been at any previous time. General intelligence has increased and there are more persons capable of leadership in the local work of the Bible school; the general movement has drawn to it great and masterly minds, and through these great leaders methods have been developed which complete the equipment of the Sabbath-school for the wide field which it now occupies.

An Evangelizing Force

There are two phases of Sabbath-school work; the first is as an evangelizing agency in places where no local Church exists; the second is as a part of the regular work of an established local church. In the first, it is a pioneer; in the second, it is "the Bible-studying-and-teaching service of the Church."

The Sabbath-school has been described as "the most flexible, adaptable, and far-reaching institu-

tion ever designed for the conversion of the world."[1] The Sabbath-school in its missionary phase has been one of the chief forces for the evangelization of new-country communities, and the pioneer of the Church on the frontier. Missionaries, churches, and redeemed communities throughout the land testify to the efficiency of this popular and rational method of evangelization. A missionary, in a New Hampshire mountain district, organizes a Sabbath-school in a community of seventy people, and through the children the parents are reached and the whole community experiences a revival. Another, in southern Illinois, organizes a Bible-school where impassable roads, scattered churches, and an under-supply of ministers present a needy field among careless people given to drinking, swearing, and reveling. Near the line of the Great Northern Railroad in Minnesota a missionary finds pupils in the public school who do not know what a Sunday-school is. A home missionary on the Snake River, in Oregon, meets, in his travels over the ranges, young men who have grown to their ma-

Frontier Work

[1] The Pastor and the Sunday-school" (Hatcher), page 29.

jority and never have attended any kind of Church service and never have heard a sermon. In new communities, East and West, the Sabbath-school is often the pioneer in these needy fields.

There are many places in the older settled States in the East and middle West where rural communities have degenerated and have lost the spiritual and moral forces which once controlled them. Expert investigators, some from merely scientific motives, and others with missionary purposes, have carefully studied conditions and tendencies in rural communities. Some of these students regard the conditions of country life as perilous to the national welfare. They paint in somber hues the rapid decay of "communities that might as well have been in the middle of the Dark Continent so far as Christianizing influences are concerned." In places where industrial and economic changes have resulted in the abandonment of churches, the missionary work of the Sabbath-school is of great value.

Depleted Communities

In a destitute neighborhood in Georgia, Martha Berry was led to open a school for Bible study, and from this simple beginning a large industrial train-

ing-school has developed and has transformed the character of the community.

After the close of the Civil War, a colony of Northern people, chiefly from Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Iowa, settled at Christiansville, in the "black belt" of Virginia. They became imprest with the need of Christian work among the negroes and were led to organize a Sabbath-school for these destitute people. In a few months the work extended, a day-school was also organized, and the Board of Freedmen's Missions undertook the establishment of a permanent mission. This school is now equipped with large buildings and an efficient industrial department, and has profoundly affected the character of the people for many miles around. It is said that the Bible is read in all the homes of that community.

In the South

Stephen Paxson organized more than fifteen hundred Sabbath-schools, which furnished religious instruction to seventy thousand pupils. The late Dr. Theodore L. Cuyler said: "If you could put your finger to-night on the churches that have sprung out of Sunday-schools planted by Chidlaw and Paxson, I verily believe they

The Outcome

would outnumber all the churches in your beautiful city of Philadelphia. Their dead hands to-night are ringing church-bells over the Western prairies, through the defiles of the Rocky Mountains, until the silvery music is lost in the murmur of the Pacific seas."

The American Sunday-school Union reported in 1908 that 1,821 new Bible-schools were organized that year in hitherto neglected neighborhoods where children and youth had no religious opportunities. These schools gathered into them 6,838 teachers and 64,873 scholars. During the same year 94 churches of different denominations were organized as the outcome of Sabbath-schools that had been established in neglected neighborhoods.

The second phase of the Sabbath-school shows it as an essential part of the work of established churches for the evangelization and spiritual training of their communities. It is at once the field and the force of the Church. It is estimated that not less than from sixty to seventy-five per cent of the additions to the Church come from the Sabbath-school. "It is in the Sunday-school," says Marion Lawrence, "that we find the

Part of the Local Church

unconverted in larger numbers than in any other service of the Church."

If this is to be the day of the country church, the churches in rural communities must awaken to the possibilities of this mighty agency for the accomplishment of its mission. Yet a large number of country churches have no Sabbath-school, and many keep their Sabbath-schools open part of the year only.

Changes that have occurred in the methods of the public schools have made the Sabbath-school of greater importance than it was in earlier days. Elementary schools do not give attention to religious and moral instruction as they did in the days of our fathers. In the primitive log schoolhouse where the children sat on puncheon benches, the Bible, the Catechism, and the New England primer were the chief text-books. The children in those pioneer schools imbibed a knowledge of the Bible and acquired a religious and moral training which is lacking in the public schools of our day.

A Modern Necessity

The "Ordinance of 1787," known as "the most notable law ever enacted by the representatives of

the American people," gives prominence to religious instruction in these words, "Religion, morality, and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools, and the means of education shall forever be encouraged." This ordinance is a fundamental law of our land and authorizes the teaching of religion in the schools throughout the nation. The Constitution of the United States declares that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion." But this provision must be interpreted in harmony with the fundamental principle exprest in the ordinance just quoted. It is clearly misinterpreted and misapplied when it is held to forbid the teaching of Christian truth in the public schools.

Secularized Schools

In addition to the political influences which, by excluding the Bible and religious teaching, have secularized our schools and, in a great measure, disqualified them for the highest development of character, there are other influences which are operating to accomplish the same perilous result. Material advancement has opened so many lines of mental activity and interest that attention is still

further diverted from religion in the educational systems of our schools. When Dr. Franklin drew electricity from the clouds on a kite-string, the children in the schools of that time were learning in the New England primer,

"In Adam's Fall,
We Sin-ned All."

To-day, the religious lessons of the primer have no place in school; but the power in the kite-string is the subject of study in all our schools. Students are not acquainted now with the consequences of the "Fall of Adam," but thousands of our students in technical schools can explain the results of the fall of the voltage in an electric current. The multiplied departments of modern investigation and study, of which electricity is a single example, fill so large a place in our schools that there is no room for the study of religion and morals.

These conditions place upon the Church the responsibility of providing an adequate training for the spiritual development of the children and youth. The Church may well hold fast to the brief period which this material age still allows it to use for the

spiritual instruction of its young people. The Sabbath-school is a sacred trust and the Church must make the most of this precious opportunity to fortify the youth with religious principles.

If we regard the Sabbath-school as the "Bible-studying-and-teaching service of the Church," the school connected with a country church has some advantages over one located in the city. **The Country Sabbath-school** In the country, the Sabbath-school is usually more closely identified with the Church, and officers and teachers are not compelled to adopt the strenuous methods of city workers to maintain the interest and attendance of the school. Yet the leaders of the work in the country should not neglect any method or device that will add real value to the management of the school.

Sabbath-schools in country places now have the assistance of the organized county work in making them familiar with modern approved methods. And many of the methods now used may properly be adopted in the rural Sabbath-school. **Supplemental Lessons** When fully understood, the supplemental lessons should have a favorable reception in the most conservative churches, because these les-

sons are a part of the modern movement toward a return to the more careful instruction of children in a systematic knowledge of the Scriptures. Marion Lawrence has declared that the supplemental lessons would be more fittingly named if they were called "fundamental lessons." They require the direct study of the Bible, the leaflets assigning certain portions of the Bible, the Catechism, choice passages from the Psalms and standard hymns to be memorized by the pupils. Different denominations publish these lessons to suit the requirements of their respective churches. They include instruction in Church history, and especially the history of the denomination. The system of grading recognized by the International Sunday-school Association is the basis on which the schools of various denominations are unified.

Graded Lessons

The international lessons have been of the greatest value in the progress of Sabbath-school instruction; but, for many years, thoughtful persons have exprest the conviction that this system does not fully meet the needs of the Sabbath-schools. The "fundamental" teachings have been crowded out and the efficiency of the Sab-

bath-school as an agency for the development of character has been impaired. In addition to the supplemental lessons, a carefully graduated system of instruction is now being introduced, called "Graded Sabbath-school Lessons."[1] The departments recognized in this system are beginners' (age under six), primary (ages 6-8), junior (ages 9-12), intermediate (ages 13-16), senior (ages 17-20), and advanced. There is great promise in this movement and the graded system may be applied to the country Sabbath-school as well as to those connected with city churches.

These supplemental and graded lessons, while returning, in some measure to the methods of our fathers, have great advantages over those methods. This modern return to the "old paths" has the inspiration of an international movement to support it. The lessons and the lesson system are the production of consecrated scientific efforts of educational experts and the result of many years' ex-

[1] These lessons are in course of preparation by the Lesson Committee in accordance with instructions given by the Twelfth International Sunday-school Convention, held at Louisville, Kentucky, June, 1908. The issue of the lessons began with October, 1909.

perience. They are interesting and attractive to the minds of children and are, also, sincere and spiritual, and meet the needs of the pupils in a more efficient way than the stern drudgery of former days.

Adult Classes

The importance of the adult class is now receiving emphasis which it has long deserved. It might be said that the advanced department has been the "neglected half" of the Sabbath-school. "It is a common saying among educators that educational influence works from above downward. Increase of excellence in the higher grades lifts up the lower. In the Sabbath-school this natural method of advance has been reversed. This is, perhaps, the only educational department in the civilized world where the highest grades are notably poorer than the lower."[1] Certainly there is room for improvement of the adult department as well as the lower grades of the Bible-school. New life in the "Bible class," according to the principle just stated, if growth is to be normal, will lift up the lower grades of the school to a greater degree of excellence. And there is no part of the Church in which the need of an "adult class movement" is

[1] "Adult Bible Classes" (Wood and Hall), page 3.

greater than in the country churches. The old-fashioned "Bible class," in most of our churches, needs renovation, and the present movement encourages us to hope that there will be an improvement in these classes. The plan of organized classes is well suited to the work of a country church because they afford additional bonds of fraternity and help to sustain the attachment of the members of these classes to the school and the Church.

The movement for "all the Church in the Bible-school" is one that is fitted to the country church. There are many who can not attend the school, but this movement includes the home department, and those who can not leave their homes may be counted as members of the Bible-school if they are enrolled in the home department.

The Home Department

The organization of the home department is very simple. A superintendent is appointed for this department, and visitors assigned to various districts. Special lesson helps for the home department are published by the denominational and other publishing-houses. The visitors keep lists of the members,

to whose homes they make regular visits, giving help to the members in the study of the lessons and receiving reports of their work. These reports are collected by the superintendent of the department, who presents his report to the pastor and the main school. In this way persons studying regularly in their homes are brought into the closest possible relation to the school. Even the messenger service is applied successfully in country Sabbath-schools as an important aid to the home department.

Workers' Library

The Church in the country should be equipped with a library, and one department of this library should contain a number of well-selected books for the teachers and officers of the Sabbath-school and other Christian workers and leaders. The isolation of country Sabbath-schools from the inspiration of great leaders is overcome partly by the attendance of representatives at the conventions of the State and county associations; but a number of choice books in the possession of the teachers, which they may study as the best results of the experience of religious educators, will give better returns than those received from conventions.

It has been found difficult to hold a teachers' meeting in country places. These difficulties are so great that few schools attempt to hold regular meetings of officers and teachers. The same objections are offered to the teacher training class. Yet both of these are of great importance. And the country Sabbath-school must seek some means of overcoming the objections and hindrances which are preventing it from participation in the benefits of the normal-class movement.

Teacher Training

A well-organized Sabbath-school, under the direction of able, loyal, and enthusiastic officers and teachers, is an asset of power to a country church. It is the sword of Goliath; there is none better.

X

DENOMINATIONALISM

ALL the problems of missions and evangelization are complicated by the existence of different denominations in the Church. The process of evangelizing the rural communities is affected by the presence of numerous sects in the field of operation. In cities, churches of widely different faith and polity may flourish without clashing, even tho they are located in the same block. But in rural communities such differences existing within the same territory have a greater effect on the work of the Church. Religious differences mar the solidarity of the rural population. The common language, social relations, and industries tend to unite the people, and the existence of these religious sects creates a marked division. Difference on religious questions in a community of country people is one of the clearest instances of the general principle that "artificial divisions of mankind into separate societies is a per-

The Evils of Sects

petual source in itself of hatred and dissension among men."[1]

President Hyde, of Bowdoin College, refers to a report of the Maine Bible Society in 1892, illustrating the condition of a county in Maine. The families canvassed were divided as follows (without giving the figures): Adventist, Baptist, Christian, Congregationalist, Episcopal, Freewill Baptist, Methodist, Roman Catholic, Unitarian, Universalist, and others. These conditions exist all over the nation.

Divided Forces

The ordinary home-mission operations of the Church are expended in the great centers of population or in new settlements. Country churches in old-settled communities do not usually receive help from the home-mission funds of the Church. Each Church, therefore, must struggle to maintain itself. Where the community is over-churched this imposes a burden upon the people too heavy for them to bear, and often creates a spirit of competition which sometimes degenerates into shameful sectarianism, a detriment to the cause of Christianity in the whole community.

[1] Burke's Works, Vol. II, page 195.

Different denominations operating in the same territory divide the forces and resources of the community. Each denominational organization requires the full machinery of a church—buildings, equipment, pastor, and other necessary expenses. The results, in many cases, are not equal to the expense involved.

Waste

Denominationalism is a fact with which we must deal. We can not abolish it, and we can not ignore it. It is a condition of the present day which we must recognize in considering the problems of the Church in our times.

The Reformation, which exalted the Bible as the only rule of faith and life, and established the right of private judgment, introduced a zeal for truth and a latitude for the opinions of men which were not enjoyed under the system which recognized the pope as the supreme authority in all matters of faith. Consequently, the reformed churches early acquired the habit of maintaining the truth by separation. "Come out from among them and be ye separate" was the golden text of every new view of the truth. These tendencies, augmented, in some cases, by personal

The Basis of Denominationalism

ambitions, jealousies, and misunderstandings, resulted in the multiplication of denominations.

The spirit of sectarianism was so strong half a century ago that it was difficult to secure any general cooperation of churches in Christian work. Certain churches of the stricter sort, zealous for the truth, did not allow their members to attend other churches, even when the teaching of those churches differed but slightly from their own. If any of their members were guilty of attending any other Church they were subjected to discipline. This offense was technically known as "occasional hearing."

An Extreme Case

The right and duty of separation, which was strenuously adhered to in the early part of the nineteenth century, was forcibly stated and sustained with keen argument in the "Declaration and Testimony of the Associate Church." A quotation from this document scarcely does justice to the sterling faithfulness of these fathers, but it will serve to give a hint of the sound basis of truth which furnishes the ground for true denominationalism. The right of secession is justified in these words:

The Duty of Secession

"The Lord hath said, love the truth and peace. To obtain the last we must hold fast and improve the first. So far as we walk contrary to this rule the peace we obtain will be only a confederation against the cause of Christ."

Speaking further of the evils which affected the Church in the times following the apostles, this Declaration and Testimony continues:

"Had a number of upright Christians separated from the superstitions, corrupt doctrines, and human inventions which, soon after the death of the apostles, stained the glory of the primitive churches, the testimony of Jesus had never been so much lost and buried as it was under the reign of the anti-christ."[1]

These are weighty words. In these piping times of peace and federation, we may be led to suppose that denominationalism is an evil without any excuse or justification. On the contrary, the yellow leaves which contain the record of those creed-building days, and recount the conflicts for truth, furnish many sound principles which are fitted to instruct the Church even in these days which are

[1] "Presbyterian Armory," Vol. IV, pages 340, 343.

dominated by a broader spirit. This age needs to learn that truth should not be sacrificed for the sake of mere external peace—a peace which might be "only a confederation against the cause of Christ."

In contrast with these views of the fathers, which emphasized the duty of maintaining the truth even in minor matters, by separation and secession, two tendencies of thought appear at the present time: one regards division as a sin without any mitigating features; the other recognizes the right of dissent, but favors a federation of different denominations rather than insistence on absolute organic union.

Two Modern Views

The first view is exprest by a recent anonymous writer thus:

"Sectarianism is a sin wherever it exists and under whatever circumstances it is found—a sin of the first magnitude. It is utterly and forever repugnant to the genius of the gospel and of the Christian system. It imposes new and untried tests in Church polity and government; it supersedes the divine institution—the Church—by a code of laws of its own enactment and breaks up the household of faith into many warring factions."

The second view recognizes the universal union of the churches as impractical at present and holds that the unity of spirit, rather than organic unity, is essential to the integrity of the Church of Christ. This view was exprest near the beginning of the modern movement for federation in an address by Bishop Samuel Harris, D.D., LL.D., at a convention held in Washington, D. C., in 1887, under the auspices of the Evangelical Alliance. He used these words:

"What then is the need of this hour but cooperation? There is need for all Protestant lovers of their country to cooperate in Christian work."

The fullest and most recent expression of this view is found in five propositions adopted by the Inter-Church Conference on Federation, held in New York in 1905. The delegates adopted these propositions as the object of the Federal Council, namely: (1) "To express the fellowship and catholic unity of the Christian Church." (2) "To bring the Christian bodies of America into united service for Christ and the world." (3) "To encourage devotional fellowship and mutual counsel concerning the spiritual life and religious activities

of the churches." (4) "To secure a larger combined influence for the churches of Christ in all matters affecting the moral and social condition of the people, so as to promote the application of the law of Christ in every relation of human life." (5) "To assist in the organization of local branches of the Federal Council to promote its aims in their communities."[1]

In the study of the country-church problems the clearest and most advanced conception of the sphere of denominationalism is of great importance. Each denomination is distributed over the country, and all are so intermingled that each community has a mixed type of church life peculiar to itself. To deal wisely with these conditions is the key to the country-church problem.

The Ideal Parish

In some country communities one Church occupies the field exclusively in the nature of the case. Some one has said, "The ideal parish has one Church and one minister." When an evangelical Church fully occupies a territory in a fairly well-defined parish, the situation is free from denominational complications and the opportunity

[1] "Church Federation," page 34.

and responsibility of the Church are correspondingly increased.

Yet there are conditions in some places which make it desirable to have more than one Church. There are differences of disposition, temperament, or social relations which make it possible for one Church to influence some people in the community who would not be affected by another denomination. An investigation of rural churches in Vermont illustrates this fact. "Special study of thirty cases shows that, as a rule, when two distinct social grades exist in the Church of a one-church community, there is difficulty, while different churches in the same communities may accommodate the different social strata with propriety." [1] There is a great variety of communities having more than one Church. In some cases the different churches in a community are closely allied in doctrine, government, and mode of worship; in other cases they differ widely in faith and polity. In the former case the different churches are duplicating the same type of Christianity and

More than One Church

[1] George Frederick Wells in "First Annual Report of the Executive Committee of the Inter-Church Conference on Federation," page 65.

doubling the expense of maintaining the religious ordinances. Such allied churches in a community should unite in the interests of the kingdom and form an organic unity. In the latter case, organic unity may be impractical, but two courses are open to such churches: they may work side by side in mutual helpfulness and cooperation; or, under the advice of a Church-comity commission, the field may be given up by the church or churches least suited to the community.

These principles have been applied already in some places. Several years ago, a small town in Idaho had nine churches represented in a meeting held for the purpose of forming a federated Church. They agreed to "hold to those things which will forever bar any denominational controversy" and to emphasize the things upon which they agreed and which are fundamental to the Christian religion. This Church was organized on an undenominational basis, and is known as a Union Church.

A Union Church

A federated church was lately organized in Lincoln, Vermont. It was composed of three different denominations. They formed a basis of union,

agreeing to establish a federated Church to be of a denomination different from the denominations of the churches entering into the union. They regarded it as a better plan to be attached to a denomination than to form an independent "union" Church. In the brief period of its federated existence, there has been a marked improvement in the moral and spiritual condition of the community.[1]

A Federated Church

Similar local movements for cooperation and federation of rural churches are developing in other parts of the land. The wise leadership of the great denominations in the cause of federation gives hope that these efforts will lead to more effective service. The safety of the movement, from the human side, depends upon the creation of commissions similar to the Vermont Church Comity Commission recently organized, or the local branches of the Federal Council proposed in the Inter-Church Conference on Federation. The purpose of the Vermont commission, as stated in its constitution, is "to study and classify country com-

A Comity Commission

[1] "Cyclopedia of Agriculture," Vol. IV, Art., "The Country Church," by George Frederick Wells.

munities according to their social and religious conditions" in order to secure proper data for determining the advisability of federated work, and to study local Church federations and unions in various parts of the country. By means of some form of general interdenominational oversight, the principle of comity might be applied to rural parishes which would result in a great advancement of the cause.

XI

RURAL COOPERATION

FARMERS are singularly identified in a common industry, and this should lead to close organization and cooperation. But we find that farmers cooperate in a very imperfect manner. Perhaps they work independently more than any other class of producers. This lack of cooperation and organization results from the conditions of their life and work. Farm life is a life of isolation: great numbers of people, scattered over vast territories, are engaged in agricultural industries. Cooperation, under these conditions, is very difficult.

A Pressing Problem

Farmers' clubs, institutes, granges, and other forms of organization have done much to unite farmers and to improve social conditions in the country. Organization is "one of the pressing problems that American farmers have to face."[1]

[1] "Chapters in Rural Progress" (Butterfield), page 22.

The Church has been spoken of as a social center. In order that it may perform its function in the social life of the community, its relations with other social institutions must be defined. To recognize the position of the various social organizations of the community is the course of wisdom. There are organizations outside the Church, yet combining the interests of the whole neighborhood, and working for the general good, with which the Church should gladly cooperate. The Church can not consistently hold itself aloof from movements for the general good which have not had their origin with the official board of the Church. Those institutions which aid in bringing all classes into sympathy and encourages public spirit and progress should receive the cooperation of the Church.

The Church in Rural Cooperation

The Church itself is composed of subordinate organizations: it has different departments or different forms in which it operates. On account of various interests, classes, and departments, there are organized within the Church, missionary societies, young people's societies, men's leagues or brotherhoods, and

Organized for Social Service

many other organizations, according to the needs of the different churches. These various organizations, properly considered, are only different phases of the service of the Church. While these organizations have for their object the spiritual development of their members, they are also instruments for affecting the social life of the Church and community.

In addition to these societies within the denominational lines, there are certain organizations of a general or interdenominational character which are distinctly Christian and in harmony with the purposes of the Church. Of this class are the Women's Christian Temperance Union and other reform associations which have a local organization. With these the Church will naturally cooperate.

Allies of the Church

The Church may not properly cooperate with political parties as such, but moral issues arise which require the Church to declare itself on certain fundamental principles of morality which may involve political action. The Church should give hearty support to those reform movements which affect the community and the nation. It should take high ground on questions of personal,

political, and civic righteousness and public and private morality. Systematic efforts should be made to educate its own members by the distribution of the literature of reform and by cooperation with those special organizations which may be regarded as the allies of the Church.

The sympathetic relations of the Church and the home have already been referred to, and their cooperation is natural and essential if each is to perform its proper function in the community. The Church can do much for the home: by its pulpit teaching, by the use of suitable literature, by training in the young people's society, and in the Sabbath-school the Church may inspire nobler ideals of home life.

The Home

The children of the school district are the children of the Church parish and the Church and the pastor, naturally, will be interested in the school. The pastor should keep in touch with the school, or the different schools in the parish. Without assuming an officious position a judicious pastor will find many points of contact with the young people and children by making himself familiar with their school life. Sabbath-school

The School

workers who visit the day-school strengthen the bonds which unite the children to them. "The day of prayer for private and public schools," which is observed in September, gives occasion for the emphasis of the school in the public service of the Church on that day. Even where there is no high-school, a service devoted to the scholars of the public school on the last Sabbath of the school year is a great help to the school.

There are institutions of a social and business nature which are not so directly connected with the Church as others that have been mentioned. These are the farmers' organizations, such as the grange, the farmers' club, the farmers' institute, the mutual insurance company, the commercial club, and the village improvement association.

Farmers' Organizations

In the days before this age of machinery, farmers cooperated in the struggle to reduce the wilderness to subjection. The sickle, the scythe, the cradle, and the flail were symbols of the daily hand-to-hand conflict with the soil. The fathers were confederated in this struggle. Their axes fell with musical rhythm and their rifles cracked

Old-time Social Life

in the forest to proclaim the brotherhood of the frontier. They swapped work and their social nature found outlet in wood-choppings, husking-bees, log-rollings, spellings, singings, and various neighborhood gatherings. These were features of the social life in the days of buckskin and homespun. They are now only romantic traditions. A healthy rural life to-day requires a modern substitute for these things which are embedded in the beautiful reminiscence of the past. The rapidly awakening social spirit of our day may develop forms of fraternal life which will be more than a substitute for that old-time social life. Let the Church do its part to develop this spirit in the community by aiding and co-operating with every institution and organization designed for the good of the people in their social relations.

Parties, socials, lectures, entertainments, picnics, ball-games, and outdoor sports are some of the present forms in which the social nature finds expression. With warm, enthusiastic human energy, the Church should be in the midst of this busy social life. The social leadership of the community should not be permitted to

The Church in the Midst

fall into the hands of those who are indifferent to the moral and spiritual welfare of the people. "The Church should exercise a wise caution and resist the monopolizing spirit, being willing to suffer effacement if thereby the community is served best. The family, the school, the town, societies, orders, social groups and institutions of many sorts—all have their place. A false ecclesiastical ambition would have the Church absorb as many of these functions as possible, but it is far better that such developments of institutionalism should be separate from the Church, whose proper office is inspirational."[1]

In communities that are destitute of such social movements, it is often necessary for the Church to lead in the development of these social institutions. But in those communities in which the social needs of the people are met through other organizations, social groups, or institutions, the Church will be present chiefly by the cooperation of the pastor and members of the Church as citizens. The impress of the thought, motives, and influence of the Church may be indirect, but it must be distinct.

Benevolence is too often left to the individual

[1] "The Country Town" (Anderson), page 285.

impulse or turned over to other organizations. "There is need of a restoration of the brotherly love and the practical spirit that dominated the early Christian Church. The remedy lies in the adoption of business-like methods of compassion and relief which will make the Church, in present-day conditions, the light of the world as a practical and helpful brotherhood. This would give the Church an enlarged, practical mission to the 'household of faith.' "[1] A permanent fund should be provided in the financial budget, subject to the order of the board of deacons or the trustees, and in this way the Church is enabled to meet cases of need in the congregation and the community. Even in communities that do not have the poor with them always, emergencies will arise, and the Church should be prepared to meet such cases with timely assistance.

Christian Fraternity

In reporting investigations of rural churches, George Frederick Wells sets forth the failure of the churches to render dependable assistance as the main cause which has led to the establishment of fra-

[1] "First Century Christianity in Twentieth Century Conditions" (Blanchard), page 54.

ternal orders as centers of social life and helpfulness. In the part of his report which refers to the relation of the Church to the secret orders, he says:

The Church and the Orders

"The relation of fraternal orders to the Church is little short of paradoxical. The fraternal orders pay a high tribute to the Church in that their central idea, that of brotherhood and charity, is taken directly from the Christianity of the Church. When the lodge is taken as a substitute for the Church, as is often the case, society suffers a cheapening process. A large majority of the stronger clergymen in the towns are not members of fraternal orders, they, apparently, being "called but not chosen." The lower class of rural clergy are not in the fraternal orders, as a rule, seemingly because they are not wanted; but the intermediate grade of ministers are usually also fraternity men. The lodges in some cases seem to hinder the moral and spiritual mission of the Church, while in other cases they are handmaidens of the Church, in that they do a work that the Church fails to do. The large majority of the testimonies to me indicate that if the Church were doing her full spiritual and social

duty, there would be no place for the fraternal order." [1]

This testimony emphasizes the duty of the Church to take up her social responsibilities, to redeem the failures of the past, and to cooperate with those institutions which have grown up in the community, some of which, she must confess, have taken out of her hands, in some measure, the neglected half of her mission to the world.

The Church will heartily cooperate with any movement in the school or the farmers' organization for the social and general welfare of the community. Such cooperation, to be most effective, should not be confined to the limits of the local parish, but should work in harmony with the social forces of the entire county and State. There are many ways in which local neighboring churches and communities may cooperate to their mutual advantage, thus securing a larger basis for community cooperation and organization.

The Greater Parish

In January, 1904, an organization was formed in McHenry County, Illinois, called "The McHenry County Federation of Rural Forces." It was com-

[1] *The Outlook*, August 18, 1906.

posed of the county Farmers' Institute, the Teachers' Association, the Women's Domestic Science Association, and the Pastors' Association. The next year the county Women's Christian Temperance Union joined the federation, and in 1906 the Young Men's Christian Association entered into the federation. In the conventions held by these united forces, the practical problems touching the social life of the whole county were discust. Among the matters taken under consideration were the public transportation of school-children, the reorganization of the county fair along educational lines with the elimination of objectionable features, the campaign for good roads, extreme dairying, the money craze, and abuses of industry when considered in reference to the general good.

An Instance

These forces for rural betterment were organized according to plans suggested by President Butterfield, of the Massachusetts Agricultural College, and lately a member of the Country Life Commission appointed by former President Roosevelt. Such federations have been in operation in Rhode Island and in Michigan. The plans are explained in President Butterfield's

Federation of Rural Forces

book, "Chapters in Rural Progress." Speaking of the three great rural forces, President Butterfield says:

"There are two interesting facts about these institutions: (1) None of them is doing a tithe of what it ought to be doing to help solve the farm problem. The Church apparently is just holding its own—tho that is doubted by some observers. Rural schools are not, as a rule, keeping pace with the demands being made upon them: comparatively few students in the whole country are studying scientific agriculture. Not one farmer in twenty belongs to a farmers' organization. (2) All these institutions are awakening to the situation. Progress during the last decade has been especially gratifying. Cooperative efforts among farmers are more cautious, but more successful. The grange has nearly doubled its membership since 1890; and it, as well as other farm organizations, has more real power than ever before. The rural school question is one of the liveliest topics of the day among farmers as well as educators. Opportunities for agricultural education have had a marvelous development within a decade. Discussion about rural church federation, the

rural institutional Church, rural social settlement, and even experiments in these lines are becoming noticeably frequent."[1]

Such a presentation of rural progress by a careful sociologist quickens our anticipations for the future developments of the country. The strategy of the rural Church lies in its ability to adjust itself to the changing conditions, and, in faithfulness to its spiritual mission, to cooperate with all the forces that are working for rural progress.

[1] "Chapters in Rural Progress" (Butterfield), page 234.

XII

"THE STRANGER WITHIN THY GATES"

THE winning of the immigrant is essential to the perpetuation of the Church and the social institutions of America. The statistics of foreign immigration have passed the million-mark. We dare not ask in cynical tones, "Who is my neighbor?" It is a serious, practical question for the nation and the Church. The immigration of foreigners into this country affects the rural Church as well as states and the nation. The question must be dealt with by the country church as well as by the statesman and the sociologist. In rural districts, as well as in great centers of population, the foreigner is a problem, a peril, and a possibility.

The Immigrant

There are many quiet, rural neighborhoods that would be surprized to be informed that they have a "problem of immigration"; but wherever there is a

foreigner who does not know the English language, or who does not understand American ideals and institutions, or who is not a member of the local Church, or who does not enter into fellowship with the Christian life of the community, there is, in the person of that foreigner, a problem of immigration for that community and its Church.

A Problem

The problem presented to the rural church appears in two forms: (1) Foreign laborers employed in mining and industrial plants located in the rural districts; (2) foreigners who own or rent farms or work as farm hands.

Large sections of New England and the Middle States and other parts of the land are affected by foreign laborers engaged in industrial labor in plants located in the rural towns and in the open country districts. The writer recalls the example of an old country church in Ohio. A few years ago the place where it stands was a quiet, romantic rural scene. The farmers from the surrounding hills and up and down the valley came to the Church on this picturesque stream to worship on the Sabbath. Many years ago coal-

A New Problem for An Old Church

mines were opened at various places near the Church, and in recent years the business has grown to a great enterprise. The hills are now burrowed for miles with the tunnels and passages of the vast coal mines. The valley is filled with a busy mining town. Farms quite high up on the hillsides are staked off into town lots. A large foreign Church with a parochial school has been erected, and these people from beyond the sea perpetuate, as far as possible, the religion, language, customs, and ideals of their fatherland. The old Presbyterian Church still maintains its worship for the American community in this once romantic spot so changed in a quarter of a century. It has realized its problem, and has gathered many of the children of the miners into the Sabbath-school, and is developing a mission field of great importance.

The reader may be acquainted with similar instances. Wherever mines, potteries, and other industries have been introduced into rural communities, they have brought people of other lands. Even the forms of Christianity which most of them cherish are alien to our soil. In the Pacific States and in the Southwest are found Orientals who do not

even claim the Christian name. In many places these Orientals have become a considerable factor in rural life.

A large proportion of the foreigners who are engaged in farming are of the better class of immigrants. Many of them come from those countries in Europe which most nearly resemble our own in civil and religious institutions. While there are multitudes of these immigrants who are illiterate and godless—a peril to our nation—yet of the better class there are great numbers who add to the strength of our race. And many of this class find their way to the inviting fields of agriculture in different parts of the country. These often adopt our customs and accept our institutions without any great shock to their prejudices and become most patriotic citizens.

Foreigners on the Farm

Yet there are rural communities made up of foreigners who preserve their own languages, institutions, and customs and live for years in America without becoming American. In many cases, a community of foreigners exists within an American rural community; there is no intercourse between the two communities, the "foreigners" live in their

crowded shacks, an annoyance to their American neighbors. And in the case of many of the more thrifty and intelligent class who make progressive American farmers, they have brought with them from the old country certain liberal views which weaken the essential institutions of American life.

To a great extent our country churches and communities are not aware of the real problem of the foreigner because a dull, selfish indifference gives them a satisfaction in attending to the routine of farm work without taking any special interest in their neighbors where matters of work and trade are not directly concerned. Each farm home is intent upon its own affairs; there are "chores" that occupy the farmer's spare time, and the women are constantly involved in the cares of the housework; matters of the public good and the future welfare of our homes and nation, the call of the kingdom, the need of the strangers, and the wider oportunities for usefulness are too often shut out of our view by the narrow horizon of self-centering service.

Our Selfish Indifference

There is a general inability of our rural people to adapt themselves to the conditions produced by the

introduction of foreigners into the midst of American homes. In general, it is admitted that Amer-

Our Let-alone Methods

icans are a resourceful people and capable of adapting themselves to varied conditions. The ability of our rural Americans to adapt themselves has been shown in many ways. In pioneer days and on the frontiers they have endured every privation and have readily fitted their lives to conditions in the wilderness. In the primitive life of the frontier, many who had known luxury were able to adopt habits of life from the savages and accommodate their wants to the resources of the forest and plains. They used buckskin for clothing and rawhide for iron; they ate corn-bread and made no complaint when they were deprived of flour, sugar, and salt. But, as communities grow older and conditions involving social and moral adaptability arise, they seem to lose this versatility of resources. The entrance of foreigners into the community requires the Church and community to adapt themselves to this new element. But it is too often assumed that these foreigners are beyond the influence of the Church and that the Church and community may go on in the routine of community life

without regard to their presence. The Church conducts masterly enterprises of foreign missions, molding the future course of foreign empires, but when these foreigners come to America and settle within the sound of our church-bells, the Church is paralyzed and seems unable to minister to their simplest social and religious needs.

It sometimes happens that the bravest spirits in the Ladies' Aid or the Missionary Society venture to call at the homes of some of these foreign neighbors. The indiscriminate mass of kitchen utensils and clothing spread about the floor, the fumes of beer, the dogs, chickens, geese, and pigs at the very door, and even in the house, drive the ladies back to their own comfortable homes, where in breathless agitation they recite the exciting stories of their adventures among the "foreigners." The let-alone method is often pursued without such reconnoitering efforts as this, and the Church suffers the strangers within our gates to dwell apart and does not ask seriously the question, "Who is my neighbor?"

This description is qualified: its application is not universal. On the one hand, there are many for-

eigners whose homes are as clean and cultured as the homes of our native-born Americans; and, on the other hand, many American churches are dealing seriously with the problem and are seeking to adapt themselves to the presence of the strangers within their respective parishes, and to help them to better living.

A Peril

The foreigners—strangers in the rural communities—constitute a peril by no means equal to the grave problem of the foreigner in our cities. The foreigners living in the country are free from the debauching influences of municipal life. While the peril in the country is not so great as in the city, yet the presence of many strange people from other lands in the rural districts of America has given sufficient cause for alarm.

The Native Supplanted Stock

In many communities the American stock has been supplanted by foreigners. The change has occurred in some places through the introduction of some industry requiring cheap labor. In purely agricultural communities the change occurs through the poverty of the land, or through the increased price of land, or through the higher standard of living required by

the American farmer. When, for any of these reasons, the American farmer desires to sell, the foreigner is present to buy. The conditions that lead the American to wish to sell and emigrate to a newer section of the country have no influence on the foreigner. The American feels the pressure of high prices and higher standards of living, and the hardship of the American is the opportunity of the foreigner.

The process of displacement may begin with a single foreigner who comes into the community as a farm-hand. He is, in himself, not a peril but a help to the farmer. He is industrious and honest. When he becomes a renter instead of a hand, the process has begun that may result in a complete change of the character of the community. His friends in the old country hear the stories of his prosperity and some of them, as they are able, come to America and settle in the same neighborhood. He at last buys a farm and his friends are working patiently at the same process. One by one the foreign farmers supplant the American stock and the type of life in the community undergoes a change. Churches that were once strong become weak or are

disorganized and a new form of social and religious life is dominant in the place.

Institutions Disintegrated

The disappearance of churches which have furnished the inspiration of the community for years is a great loss, for with the removal of the Church, the process of the disintegration of the fundamental institutions of American society begins. Under the pressure of these influences, the European Sunday is rapidly taking the place of the American Sabbath. There are many causes that have led to the secularization of the Sabbath, but the peril is greatest in those sections that are dominated by alien influences.

Temperance and all moral standards suffer by such transformations, and where such results follow "in the trail of the immigrant," his presence is a real peril, and his industry, frugality, honesty, and intensive farming can not atone for the decline of moral fiber which results from his influence on American social life.

The immigrant is a problem for the Church to study; he is a peril, unless a vital Christianity transforms him; he is an asset and a possibility in our national life if his character can be affected

thoroughly by American evangelical Christianity. The vicious and godless among foreigners, as well as the same classes among our own people, are a constant peril without a probability of good in their favor. But a large proportion of the immigrants who have become farmers possess qualities that justify the hope of good results and encourage us to regard them as a possibility rather than a peril.

A Possibility

One hopeful feature is that, very generally, these strangers within our gates desire to become American citizens and to acquire American ways. It is said that among the slums of the cities, the ignorant foreign children quickly develop a strong patriotism. The children in a mining town, it is noticed, prefer to speak to each other in the English language, and regard the United States as their home. It is among the older class of immigrants that the conservative spirit which clings to the old-country ways prevails. Yet many who come to us in middle life are delighted with free American institutions, while not always understanding their meaning and limitations.

Ambition for Citizenship

The general intelligence of immigrants who be-

long to the farming class, the simplicity of their life in the old country, the earnest purpose of building homes for themselves in this new land, and their thrifty, industrious habits, all contribute to the possibilities of this addition to our nation.

Elements of Good Character

The Church should regard the single immigrant who may drift into the neighborhood as a possibility, and should be interested in him and seek to know him and to help him. Many a raw immigrant boy has been taken into the home of a Christian farmer and in a remarkably short time has developed into a patriotic and Christian citizen. If an individual immigrant in the community constitutes a problem for the Church, a colony of foreigners may be regarded as a more urgent problem, and demands earnest and thoughtful consideration. The Christian people are often very ignorant of the strangers who live and labor in the community. A pastor and his Church are not fitted to deal with the problem of the foreigner if they are ignorant of his character, needs, and even of his nationality. If we know our foreign neighbors indiscriminately as "Polaks," "Hun-

Our Ignorance of the Immigrant

kies," "Dagoes," or simply as "foreigners," we are not prepared to meet the problem of the foreigner, or to realize his possibility.

The first step in the winning of the immigrant is the preparation of the Church for the work. Let the pastor and his people study the problem of the strangers. Whether Germans, Italians, Bulgarians, Bohemians, Poles, Slavs, Hungarians, Syrians, Japanese, or Chinese, they have a national history that is well worth our study. The European races, especially, are worthy of study, and their history is sufficiently a part of our own to justify our efforts to master it for its own sake. And there are thrilling chapters in the national history of each of these races fitted to awaken the sympathetic interest of the Church in the strangers who come to our land with such a heritage of history. A knowledge of the history of the race or races represented in the community is an excellent introduction to a service of helpfulness among them. One pastor, following such a course, succeeded in awakening a sympathetic interest in the cause of the strangers, and brought them and his own people together in the lecture-room of the church. The

Our First Duty

foreigners drest in their native costume and gave exhibitions of the holiday life in the old country and sang their native songs.

If you are acquainted with their country and its history, if you can talk with them intelligently of their own native cities and mountains and rivers, and can name the heroic deeds of their generals and liberators and martyrs, and can tell of the piety of their saints, it will be to them like good news from the fatherland and will prepare the way for the message of the gospel. If the geography and history of the countries represented by foreigners living in the parish is studied by the Church, the people will develop an intelligent sympathy for them and will be fitted to undertake some real work for their good.

A Study of Methods

The ordinary methods of personal work should be modified to suit the requirements of the effort to influence people of an alien race. The direct appeals that assume a knowledge of the gospel among our own race must be laid aside, usually, and foundation work must be done by winning their confidence, teaching and helping them. A natural point of contact with many of these people is the learning of the English language. It is

the avenue of least resistance to an intimate knowledge of them and the winning of their confidence. The friendly help of a neighbor in learning the language, where there is an isolated foreign family, and a night-school where there is a colony, will assist in bringing that mutual understanding which is essential to the solution of the problem of the immigrant.

In the coal-fields of western Pennsylvania numerous missions and churches have been organized among foreigners and some communities have organized special schools and employ teachers to instruct the foreigners in the English language and the duties of American citizenship.

The farming communities are especially fitted for the rapid assimilation of the immigrants into American citizenship, and the Church may do a great service for the progress and stability of our nation by impressing the principles of Christianity upon the strangers dwelling within our gates.

XIII

THE AUTHORITY OF ACHIEVEMENT

THE rural districts of Europe were the strongholds of Church authority in the middle ages. In the awakening of the later days, when towns were shaking off the yoke of priests and barons, the rural population was unconscious of the struggle for liberty. In America, the country people have always regarded the Church with respect. Divisions and contending sects have sometimes made it difficult to maintain this respect, but these conditions have never prevailed to such an extent as to overthrow the general esteem of the Church in our rural communities. The older people tell us of the solemn services of the Church in the country fifty years ago; the suppressed tones and reverent air of the assembling congregation, the respect shown to the minister in the Church and in his pastoral visitation in the homes of the people.

The Passing of Authority

The peculiar authority conceded to the Church in those early times has passed away or is passing

in most of our country congregations, where it has lingered longer than in the towns and cities. Many marks of this old-time reverence may be seen, even yet, in some rural churches.

The weakening of country churches through the changes of population has contributed to the decline of this spirit of reverence for the Church. The membership of many churches which were once strong organizations has decreased to such an extent that their large, rectangular meeting-houses stand in the midst of the changed community like relics of a past age. The Church is opened occasionally when some "supply" comes to preach to the faithful few who sit scattered among the pews of the spacious building—a shadow of the great congregation that once worshiped there. The imperfect financial equipment, the absence of business methods, the unworthy devices that are often resorted to in order to secure the funds necessary for the support of the Church; the irregular supply of preaching, the poorly-fitted preachers sometimes employed, the jealousies of denominations, and the low ethical standards of life exhibited in the conduct of church-members—all tend to break down that re-

spect for the Church which should exist in the minds of the people of the community if the Church is to become a controlling factor in the spiritual, moral, and social uplift of the people.

Authority an Essential

The Church is the organized exponent of the Kingdom of God in the world, and it is essential that men shall be imprest with a sense of the divine appointment of the Church as God's agency for the regeneration of the world. This authority can be established by argument from the Scripture and can be supported by abundant proof from the history of the world confirming the arguments from the Bible by the testimony of the works done by the Church in fulfilment of the declaration of its Founder. But these are not the arguments that will have weight with the men of this age. The saints are to judge the world; but this practical age demands that the Church shall "make good" now if it is to receive the attention of the world to its message. "What must not he possess," said Savonarola, "who possesses the Possessor of all things!" "The true aristocracy," said Spurgeon "are believers in Jesus. They are the only 'Right Honorables.'" How shall the community be made

to accept the Church in its midst as a body of "kings and priests unto God?"

It would be idle for the Church in this awakened age to arrogate to itself high-sounding titles, or to make dogmatic claims of authority and demand that men should submit to it because of these artificial symbols of authority. The world long ago repudiated the assumed authority of the Church in temporal matters, and it would give scant respect to the external rites of the Church, in this noontide of enlightenment, if they were resting on an assumed authority.

The Ground of Authority

More than half the rural population of the nation is outside the Church. How can the Church gain a prestige in the eyes of the people by which it may be enabled to effectually offer its message of hope to the world with an authority that will secure a favorable hearing? How can the Church attract the attention, hold the respect, and draw the devotion of the masses to itself as the heaven-ordained leader of men? The words of the prophet apply to the country church at this time with peculiar fitness, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."

Can the Church claim ascendency by virtue of its antiquity? Human nature pays a tribute of respect to customs and institutions that have come down through many generations: the Church shares in this natural respect which men give to things that are old, a kind of ancestral worship—the dumb tribute of human nature to heredity. But antiquity will not give to the Church that ascendency in the minds of men of our time which is necessary to impress them with the message of the Church as a matter of supreme importance.

Wealth, culture, and learning give a certain authority; but, altho the Church may claim all these, she does not possess through them the authority that demands the attention of the masses and requires their acceptance of her message and leadership.

The ascendency so essential to the Church in this age is attained only by the demonstration of the power of the Church to benefit the conditions of human life, to bless society, and to develop character and ethical conduct corresponding to the high standards revealed in the faith of the Church. The authority of the age in which we live is the authority of achievement. While the current life in the

Church is unethical and unworthy, it is difficult to impress upon the world the right of the Church to a place of leadership. If the Church does not create a genuine and effective helpfulness and brotherhood, the Church—and not only the country church—"has had its day." If the Church, in the coming day, should lack in practical achievement, it will not stand in the place of authority; it may be retained as a part of the ancestral furniture of the community, to be brought out on ceremonial occasions to perform the part required by tradition and etiquette at funerals and weddings; but, as a vital force in the community, it will be a thing of the past.

Missionaries among benighted races where the Church is unknown preach the simple story of God's love, the service and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and the terms of the gospel. The Spirit uses this simple ministry in the conversion of the heathen. But in America the message is presented through the organized Church whose members, forms of worship, and doctrines are matters of common knowledge. The glorious message is met by dull ears and cynical hearts because the Church which represents the mes-

sage does not interpret the high ethical standards of the gospel into terms of daily life.

The failure of the Church does not excuse the self-righteous people outside the Church who reject the message of the Church—the everlasting gospel.

Without Excuse

These die in their sins because they reject the gospel; but the Church is responsible for its failure to accomplish the results in personal life and social ethics which the possession of a high and holy mission justifies men in expecting from it.

Through its delay in adjusting itself to the new order there appears to be some ground for the declaration of a high dignitary that "Protestantism is

A New Authority

losing the mastery over the controlling forces of modern life," and "has lost that old authority of the Church, even in its own families." Yet, if we may judge by the present awakening of the Church to its missionary and social responsibility, Protestantism is acquiring a new authority. The prestige of the ministry no longer rests on the respect of men for "the cloth" and the ascendency of the Church rests no longer on antiquity or tradition. The ministry and the Church

are, at the present time, acquiring a new authority by virtue of their recognition of the needs and problems of the day and the practical evidences that the Church regards love, service, and sacrifice as the essential elements of its mission. By a clear-eyed vision of men's needs and by victorious achievement in the practical adjustment of problems now pressing for solution, the Church is regnant. The churches in rural communities, as well as those in the centers of population, are gradually realizing the call of the new day and are accepting the responsibilities of wider fields and higher ethical life.

A Church That Does Things

Scarcely a man in the community will not concede to the Church a certain respect as being "put in trust with the gospel," yet scores of people are ignoring the spiritual message and authority which rightly belong to it. The present definite purpose of the Laymen's Movement, to "evangelize the world in this generation," will be an inspiration to every department of Church work and should encourage every local church to attempt the accomplishment of definite and positive service in its own community. When the Church fully realizes its divine mission

to the world it will not be content with merely maintaining its regular services, but will accomplish the things that will establish its right to the exalted place that is assumed in its profession. As a spiritual unity it will manifest a genuine and helpful brotherhood, establishing the solidarity of the Church regardless of denominational variations; it will be practically identified with the interests of the home, the school, and the community; it will possess a ministry, evangelical, evangelistic, capable of wise leadership, and well instructed in the science of social engineering as well as in Biblical interpretation; and it will be composed of members who are consistent, public-spirited, honorable, and devout. This is the country church of the dawning day.

XIV

THE COUNTRY CHURCH PLANT

ARCHITECTURE holds an important relation to religion among all races. The advent of Christianity altered the problems of architecture existing at that time. After the beginning of Christianity the highest attainments of architecture were to be made in building churches instead of temples. For centuries the building of churches was almost the only employment of architecture. It has been modified in the Christian centuries to meet the requirements of the different ages of the history of the Church. It is being adapted effectively to the modern effort to apply the gospel to present-day conditions.

Architecture and Christianity

Many churches erected within the last decade are remarkable in their designs, for their beauty and practical fitness for all the uses of the modern Church. Improvements in lighting, heating, and

ventilation of auditoriums have been made. And this modernization of church architecture is one of the distinct evidences of the sincere purpose of the Church to seriously attempt the application of the gospel to the conditions of to-day.

The Old Meeting-House

The quaint structures of our grandfathers, with tower-like pulpits and penlike apartment-pews; and the slightly altered meeting-houses of the next generation, with long stems of stove-pipe pending by wires from the ceilings and cumbrous chandeliers, bearing ill-smelling oil-lamps—have both passed away. In their stead, we have the modern, well-designed church, comfortable, convenient, and beautiful.

The Modern Church

The advance in church architecture is apparent in the rural parishes as well as in cities. Increased comforts and conveniences of home life which are being added to the farm equipment create a demand for more comfortable and more suitable church buildings. But there is a lack of distinctly rural architecture in churches. Too many modern country churches are built on plans designed primarily for the conditions of the town. The conditions of the country church justify

the special study of its needs by architects in order to design a type of church plans suited specially for rural parishes.

In many cases the problem of meeting the needs of the community more fully is not the problem of building a new church but of remodeling and adapting existing church buildings to present-day conditions.

If a new church is to be built, it would be wise to employ an architectural engineer to give the problem conscientious and sympathetic study on the ground. He should make a complete sociological study of the congregation and community, the purposes of the Church in respect to the social life of the community, and the church life of the denomination. The church and its accessories should be designed with a view to adapting it to all these conditions as perfectly as possible. The factors of location and landscape conditions enter into the problem of the architect.

Thorough Preparation of Design

In cities, where compactness and economy of space are of first importance, the basement may be made available for dining-hall, kitchen, lecture-

room, and other accessories required for the social features of the Church. But in the country, where space does not forbid, it is better, even at increased initial expense, to build a parish-house separate from the church. The parsonage should be built in the same group or may be designed as a part of the church or parish-house.

Social-service in Design

The heating and lighting plant of the parsonage may be connected with the church and parish-house. If steam or hot-water system of heating is used the entire plant may be heated from the same boiler. The increased expense of installing one large boiler for the entire plant is more than compensated for by the increased efficiency of the system. As the heating plant is in operation continually to furnish heat for the parsonage, heat will be available at any time for the parish-house or the church. The steam or hot-water supply is controlled by valves at the boiler, so that the heat can be turned on or off at will in any part of the buildings.

Heating

The essentials of light, heat, and ventilation should have primary consideration in designing any

church. These factors are too much neglected. No building committee should neglect these vital matters or leave them to the cold mercies of a contractor. It is a common error to make minimum expense rather than maximum efficiency the controlling principle in church building. The principles of heating and ventilation are well understood by modern architects, and careful consideration of these essentials will result in increased efficiency of the Church as an agency for the good of the community.

Ventilation

The plan of the church is a matter of the greatest importance. The church is a place of worship: it should be so designed that everything in its plan would contribute to this object. Many a housekeeper has bought from a demonstrator at the fair a combined kitchen-tool: lid-lifter, pan-holder, glass-cutter, tack-hammer, and pot-hook all in one. The awkward nondescript tool soon went to the junk-dealer because it was found that it did not serve well any of the purposes for which it was designed. So people are often disappointed in the design of a church-building to combine all the requirements of

A Church for Worship Only

the congregation in one plan. They build one compact structure to accommodate the Sabbath-school, the young people's work, socials, entertainments, dinners, recreations, and public worship. It is equipped with folding-doors, nooks, alcoves, and a stuffy basement. It is cheaper, in the end, to build a church for the sole purpose of worship.

A Parish House

A parish-house, specially designed to meet the social requirements of a country congregation and community, makes it possible to have a church devoted entirely to the service of worship. In its simplest form, a parish-house may be a hall fitted for lectures, socials, entertainments, with folding partitions or curtains for the separation of classes in the Sabbath-school work. Or it may be more elaborately designed with two stories. On the lower floor there is a reading-room and library, and rooms furnished for Sabbath-school classes, study classes and prayer-meetings. On the upper floor is a commodious assembly hall.

A parsonage is a recognized necessity in country charges. The importance of building the parsonage close to the church does not rest on the convenience of the pastor; it arises, rather, from the needs of

the new community life of social service that characterizes the present time. In order that the church and parish-house may minister most fully to the needs of the people of the parish, they should be located at the point most conveniently reached from every part of the community without regard to private interests. The pastor should be at this center of the community social and religious life, and this justifies the location of the parsonage at the church.

A Parsonage

With the church, parsonage, and parish-house thus grouped in a suitable location, a water-supply system may be installed as a matter of safety and convenience. The water may be supplied from a deep well to an elevated tank or to an air-pressure tank located in the basement or in the ground under the frost-line.

The church is not properly equipped for its work without a suitable hitching-yard. Until horses are superseded by automobiles or aeroplanes for country travel, a hitching-yard must always hold a close relation to the problem of bringing the gospel into the homes of the community. A convenient and commodious yard, with well-

A Hitching Yard

built sheds or stables, sufficient to furnish protection to all the horses that may be driven to the church, will assist in making a church-going community. Considerations of humaneness require that the country church should take care of the country horses while at the church. Besides this, the way to a farmer's heart is often through his team, and regard for the horses is a practical evidence to a farmer that the Church is sincere and seeks the highest good of men.

XV

BROAD FINANCE FOR THE COUNTRY CHURCH

THE work of the country church outlined in the preceding chapters is not a fictitious dream: it is the reality of service to which God is calling His Church in these stirring times. This day of great movements is calling the Church in the rural district into larger fields of service and is offering to the Church in general opportunities to accomplish, in the rural communities of our land, a service that will affect the future of our nation and the world.

The World Thinks in Millions

In these days men count in millions, not in mills. Great money corporations are not considering propositions that do not involve the investment of millions of dollars. Are the children of this world wiser than the children of light? Can the Church, in this day of grand-scale business, deal with a close hand in the highest investments—the development of the Kingdom of God?

Many of our country churches are awake to these great opportunities; but a too common type of the country church runs in a well-worn groove of ecclesiastical routine, droning the ancient hymn,

"That old-time religion
Is good enough for me."

Such churches hold on in their exclusive way, maintain the ordinances of religion, after a sort, for their own enjoyment and "growth in grace," and give their "penny collections for the little heathen." They save money but not many souls. This lukewarm policy is not owned or blest by the Head of the Church, and He raises up other agencies to do the work that they are neglecting. The Church of the dawning day can not run on the ha'penny basis of the past. There is an immediate necessity for the Church to adopt a system of broad finance to meet the needs of the wider fields now open to the service of the Church.

Penny-Collections in the Church

A large proportion of the missionary operations of the Church has been accomplished by our country churches. Many churches that are now depleted in membership were, in the days of their strength,

liberal supporters of home and foreign missions. They have given of their means, but also of their sons and daughters. Mr. John R. Mott refers to a Presbyterian Church of about 200 members in the rural community of Blairstown, N. J., which, for several years, has given annually over $1,000 to foreign missions, or an average of $5.00 per member.[1] A Southern Presbyterian Church of 80 members, in a small place, supports a missionary, giving $1,300 per year for this purpose alone. The Rev. S. G. Huey, in an address at Winona Bible Conference, said:

Country Churches in Missions

"In several presbyteries of the United Presbyterian Church the country churches lead in liberality. An Illinois Presbyterian Church contributes $800 to the mission boards and supports its own foreign missionary besides. A Wisconsin Church has led all the churches in the county in gifts to foreign missions for many years. Its membership has never exceeded 190, while many of its city neighbors have a membership of from 500 to 700, and more wealth."[2]

[1] "The Pastor and Modern Missions" (Mott), page 135.
[2] "Winona Echoes," page 94.

While the country churches are the stronghold of the evangelizing and missionary enterprises of the Church at home and abroad, there are alarming conditions of weakness in many country churches. A storm of protest and criticism met the fast-day proclamation of the governor of New Hampshire ten years ago, in which he described the destitute condition of some New England communities. A startling article was published years ago on "Impending Paganism in New England." And Rollin Lynde Hartt published a series of articles in the *Outlook* in 1900 in which he justified the description of conditions given in the proclamation of the governor. He stated that there were in Maine at that time 282 pastorless churches in farming districts, and that some of the deserted churches were then serving as cheese factories, dance-halls, and road-houses. There has been much said about weak country churches and underpaid rural pastors, and without attempting an investigation at first hand, I give the following statement made by an expert observer in 1908:

Weak Country Churches

"In one district in New England I found eighteen out of twenty rural clergymen positively limited in

their usefulness by an inadequate financial support. The need of more money is emphasized when faithful people can not pay as much as they wish toward the Church, and too often those who are abundantly able to give are without inclination." [1]

Another writer refers to twenty-two out of forty-three churches of a certain denomination locally strong in Wisconsin, whose average salary is $429. In many country churches the struggle to meet the necessary expenses is one of agony to those concerned and often degenerates into a series of suppers, socials, and fairs.

All the conditions revealed in the investigations of students of the rural community must be fully considered in forming an estimate of the needs of the country church. The extreme examples of religious destitution indicate a tendency and a peril—but they are not yet the rule in American country life. The hopeful feature of the problem is in the enlarging vision of the country people. The spirit of the age to take broad views of things and to do large things has touched rural life and rural churches, and they are

The Peril and the Hope

[1] *Homiletic Review,* May, 1908, page 365.

no longer living unto themselves as they have in the past. Country life is the theme of public thought; the farmer has a new importance as a factor in politics, religion, education, public improvements and morals. In sympathy with this advancement, the Church is entering the upward path.

A New Church Finance

The country church needs a broad and liberal financial policy based on business principles: a policy that accepts the mission of the Church to the community and the definite purpose of the Church to fill its place in the spiritual, moral, educational, and social life of all classes in the community. This broad finance is needed not primarily because the churches require money for their support, but chiefly as an essential means for the development of character. The sense of stewardship and the consecration of property are necessary for the development of the truest Christian life. Our churches are suffering in their spiritual life because of wrong ideas of property and narrow, selfish, unscriptural finance. Usually, country churches are content to allow a few families to support the minister and bear the expenses of the Church. By a loose, give-as-you-please habit the

people deceive themselves into thinking that they are giving "as the Lord has prospered" them.

A feature of finance that should be emphasized in the country church is the obligation of the community as a whole to the Church. It is well to impress upon the Church its obligation to the community; but the community is under the highest moral obligation to fully support the Church in its midst. A spiritual Church, awake to the call of the community, with a godly and able minister, is an asset of great value to any community; and a poorly equipped Church with a poor preacher and a weak and scattered membership, still has a value which demands the earnest and liberal support of the community in return for real value received from the presence of the Church in the community. Every family in the community and every individual receives a direct or an indirect benefit from the Church. Even those who never attend the Church services are benefited in many ways by the presence of the Church and a just estimate of their indebtedness to the Church would lead all to contribute cheerfully to its support.

The Neglecting Half

In England and Europe the Church receives sup-

port from the State: a considerable part of the emoluments of the clergy comes from the public treasury. This is a practical recognition on the part of the State, in an official way, of the advantages accruing to the people from the presence of the Church and of the obligation of the people to support it.

Ecclesiastical Benefices

The Government in our country does not acknowledge in this official way "the advantages accruing to the people from the presence of the Church and of the obligation of the people to support it." The Constitution of the United States merely insures the rights of conscience and allows the Church to demonstrate to the people themselves the essential value of the Church to the people and the justice of its claims to their support. Under the American system, the people are responsible as individuals for the practical recognition of the advantages accruing to the community from the presence of the Church. This obligation is met in the voluntary contributions which the people give for the support of the Church.

Altho the nation receives immeasurable benefit from the presence of the Church, it does not give any practical recognition of the advantages accruing

to it from this source, and the majority of the people who are not members of the Church and many of those who are members follow the example of the Government and give nothing toward the support of the Church.

A writer on rural endowments in England, says: "Evidence appears to show that endowments are a mistake. The endowment artificially keeps the institution alive when, if left to natural environment, it would die. Better that it should die in the natural course than outlive its usefulness."[1]

Our State governments do not assign benefices and glebe lands for the support of rural churches. The Church is independent of the State. It may, therefore, with confidence and freedom, appeal to the voluntary support of the community. There is need of a broad financial plan of support which will include the voluntary gifts of every man, woman, and child in the community. The Church is no beggar; and church officers or committees who speak of collecting money for church work as "begging for the Church," dishonor the Head of the

[1] Quoted in *Methodist Review* by George Frederick Wells (July, 1907).

Church and perpetuate the falsehood which is the refuge of men who ignore the just debt which they owe to the Church.

Under the American system of support, it might be possible to develop a form of sustentation that would have the advantages of establishment without its disadvantages. No plan has yet been worked out by which the funds of the Church in general may be applied to the support of needy churches which do not come under the home mission boards.

Voluntary Sustenation

The head of the world's greatest monopoly has recently published his vision of the broad finance that is to dominate the entire sphere of benevolences in the future. He writes of the dawning day when religious and benevolent work will be conducted in the wisest business methods in the form of "benevolent trusts." "When these benevolent trusts come into active being," says Mr. Rockefeller, "such organizations on broad lines will be sure to attract the best men we have in our commercial affairs, as great business opportunities attract them now."

A Millionaire's Vision

The interest business men are now taking in the

business of the kingdom is an indication that the spiritual forces of the Church will be sustained more fully by the financial forces of the Church, and the business affairs of the Christian Church will be organized and administered through a federation of "benevolent trusts" which will secure the highest efficiency and economy.

President Butterfield has thus exprest his opinion:

"The Church as a whole must contribute to the support of the country church specifically. I am not sure that the best way to do this is through the conventional home-mission aid; in fact, I question whether the work ought to be termed 'missionary' work. I do not know the method, but the principle I believe to be sound. It is now generally recognized by broad-minded educators that 'the wealth of the whole State must contribute to the education of all the children of the State.' The richer communities must by some means contribute to the education of the children in the poorer communities. This is not charity, it is justice. I believe the same principle should be invoked for the country church. The wealth of the whole Church must be utilized for the

President Butterfield's View

advancement of all communities. Of course, this principle is more difficult of application in the case of the Church than in case of the State. The State is a unit. The Church is a congeries of units based on denominational lines. The problem, consequently, is far more serious, but in some way the principle must be applied."[1]

It thus appears that leaders of thought are moving toward the principle of broad finance for the Church at large which will finally establish in every community the best possible means for the spiritual, moral, and social elevation of the people.

The general movement for cooperation and federation of churches, the large sums of money given by men of wealth to great benevolent and educational purposes, the serious discussion by millionaires of the proper use of wealth, and the Laymen's Movement to undertake systematically the financing of missions as a business enterprise are indications of the fulfilment of the prophecy, "The forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee."

In the meantime, the country churches must help themselves by the adoption of more liberal and sys-

[1] *Homiletic Review*, Feb., 1908, page 113.

tematic methods in financial matters. The country churches may lead in the new visions of stewardship. The general acceptance of the tithe as the minimum of offerings to the cause of the kingdom as represented by the Church would enable many rural churches to establish themselves at once on a basis for effective work in the discharge of their responsibility for the uplift of the community and the evangelization of the world. Tithes were given in religious worship and in support of religious services by all ancient people.[1] The principle is deeply seated in the history and constitution of the human race. It was recognized by the Christian fathers and the early councils of the Church. The urgent demands of the present call for the evangelization of the world in this generation require an immediate return to the old paths in the recognition of Scripture standards of stewardship.

The Present Duty

"For Christians to apprehend their true relation to money and the relations of money to the Kingdom of Christ, and its progress in the world, is to find the key to many of the great problems now pressing for solution."[2]

[1] See article on "Tithe," Smith's "Bible Dictionary."
[2] "Our Country" (Josiah Strong), page 180.

XVI

THE RURAL PROPHET

THERE is need of higher ideals in farm life. "We need to give a larger and worthier place to the ultimate values of life in relation to agriculture. The defect in much that has been written about social life in the country is the relatively too great emphasis placed upon the wealth interest in the industry of the farmer; he is treated too much as if he were merely a producer of certain commodities, merely a beast of burden like his patient oxen. It is too often assumed that the only scientific interest is the production of corn, of milk, and meat, of wool and cotton."[1]

Higher Farm-life Ideals

The "new farmer," who is described in "Chapters in Rural Progress," "has kept pace with our industrial evolution. When the régime of barter passed away, he ceased to barter. When the world's market became a fact, he raised wheat for the

[1] Professor Richardson in the *Biblical World*.

world's market. As agriculture became a business, he became a business man. As agricultural science began to contribute to the art of farming, he studied applied science. As industrial education developed, he founded and patronized institutions for agricultural education. As alertness and enterprise began to be indispensable in commercial activity, he grew alert and enterprising." [1] All this is encouraging in the outlook of the country; but the "new farmer" must accept the higher ideal that the true problem of rural life is not how to make "two blades of grass grow where one now grows," but to make two blest graces flourish where but one now grows.

A Prophet with a Vision

The Church is the leader in this movement toward higher ideals in the life of the farm. The Church must be awakened to its mission and to the realization of its opportunities and responsibilities. It is admitted that the pastor is "the chief factor in the problem." Students of the rural problem agree that "the minister by his personality is the greatest drawing and molding force available to the country church." [2] It requires

[1] "Chapters in Rural Progress," page 56.
[2] George F. Wells, in *Homiletic Review*, August, 1907.

positive prophetic gifts in the ministry of the average rural church to overcome the inertia of his parish and awaken his Church to the realization of adequate ethical ideals in opposition to the constant and increasing pressure of the commercial forces which put the emphasis on the "wealth interest of the industry of the farmer." The pastor who has caught the vision of the coming day must lift up his voice and cry out against the narrowness and inertness of the Church: "Trust ye not in lying words saying, 'The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these!' For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute judgment between man and his neighbor; if ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt; then I will cause you to dwell in this place in the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever." (Jer. 7: 4-7.)

While recognizing the great work our country pastors have done and are now doing, the students of the problems of rural uplift emphasize the need of a higher grade of pastors for the service of the coun-

try churches. "It is unfortunate that the ablest men are, for the most part, unwilling to serve country parishes." [1]

A More Efficient Rural Ministry

An investigation of thirty-seven ministers of different denominations in New England, twenty of them in distinctly rural parishes, shows that "only 54 per cent of the total number, 40 per cent of the rural preachers, were college graduates. Only 25 per cent are theological seminary graduates; 75 per cent seemed to be lacking in efficiency from inadequate educational equipment.[2] This indicates the need of improving the efficiency of country ministers.

A Life Work

Too often young men from the theological seminary take up work in country congregations as a temporary expedient. A young preacher often looks upon a country charge as a good opportunity for study and practise in preparation for a "larger field." Apparently unconscious of any impropriety, he sometimes frankly expresses his purpose to content himself with this narrow field for a little while, in order to prepare himself for a

[1] "An Introduction to the Study of Society" (Small & Vincent), page 284.

[2] Wells, in *Homiletic Review,* August, 1907.

greater work. To "the man whose eyes are open," and whose heart has grasped the possibilities of rural life, the country church itself becomes each day his larger field. The pastor whose prophetic gifts fit him for such a work becomes a positive factor in the Church and in the community. "He is the key to the country-church problem," is the statement of the report of the Country Life Commission. A faithful, earnest pastor in a country parish who possesses a fair degree of natural ability, education, and social qualities, with a prophetic vision and a message, may wield a profound influence. No minister who has passed his sophomoric stage can regard his country parish as too small for his abilities; on the contrary, he will constantly and anxiously ask, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Able men are needed who are prepared for the service required and who are deeply conscious of the important work that is to be done in the country; and young men should give themselves to the work as they give themselves to the work of foreign missions: it should be chosen as a life work to which they may apply their whole energy with the knowledge and zeal of specialists.

The minister who is to occupy worthily the office of a country pastor should have some special fitness and training. The Country Life Commission, appointed by former President Roosevelt, gave careful consideration to the work and functions of the country church in the problem of rural improvement, and, in their report, present their conclusion in regard to the special fitness needed in the minister who enters upon the work of the country church. The report says:

Special Fitness and Training

"We must have a complete conception of the country pastorate. The country pastor must be a community leader. He must know the rural problems. He must have sympathy with rural ideals and aspirations. He must love the country. He must know country life, the difficulties that the farmer has to face in his business, some of the great scientific revelations made in behalf of agriculture, the great industrial forces at work for the making or the unmaking of the farmer, the fundamental social problems of the life of the open country.

"Consequently, the rural pastor must have special training for his work. Ministerial colleges and theological seminaries should unite with agricultural

colleges in this preparation of the country clergyman."

Theological seminaries need not be turned into agricultural colleges, but a department of work might be provided in rural sociology, or a series of lectures by professors from agricultural colleges might be instituted in the seminaries.

In commending the office of the ministry in the country church, the disadvantages and limitations should be fully recognized. One of the most generally recognized disadvantages of the country pastorate is the small salary that is attached to the office. On this subject the Country Life Commission said:

Disadvantages

"There should be better financial support for the clergyman. In many country districts it is pitiably small. There is little incentive for a man to stay in a country parish, and yet this residence is just what must come about."

A small salary is a handicap and in some cases requires a minister to give considerable time to a side line in order to make ends meet. If he has a large family, an inadequate salary imposes on him the distraction and worry of pro-

Salary

viding for them in addition to his work as a minister, which should engage all his attention and his best powers.

And, further, his small salary prevents the country pastor from equipping himself with an efficient library. This lack of books is a great hardship; he seldom has access to public libraries and depends chiefly on the books which he owns for inspiration and help.

Yet there are reasons why the country pastor should be content with a small salary, accepting it as a part of his lot and a condition of his work as the miner takes the grime of the coal-mine or the sailor takes the risk of the sea. The *Home Herald* recently made an investigation in regard to salaries by corresponding with ministers of various denominations. It declared that, "The letters, so far as they dealt with actual salary conditions, were gratifying because of the cheerful note pervading them all." The lowest salaries are paid in country places, and this cheerful view is the view that country pastors usually take of the salary problem.

The Country Life Commission suggests that it may require an appeal to the heroic young

men to enter the country pastorates as a permanent work. In many rural communities the people are not able to pay much to their pastor. Many of them are engaged in a hard struggle with hard conditions. On the meager products of the farm they scarcely maintain their homes. Among such people a faithful pastor labors in contentment on a small salary, knowing that his people are denying themselves and making sacrifices in order to support the gospel in their midst. But there are many country churches in which the people are able to pay a sufficient salary to support their pastor in a fitting manner, and yet such a Church sometimes doles out a meager subsistence to a faithful pastor. Such cases do not appeal to the heroic in the preacher.

The equipment of many country churches is so inadequate that their pastors work at a great disadvantage. Sometimes two or three or four or more preaching-places, separated by long distances and bad roads, are imposed upon one man. With these multiplied charges it is impossible for him to work out his best ideals. His labors in merely filling his preaching appointments are enough

Hardships

without attempting the manifold forms of pastoral and social service which he might accomplish if he were permitted to concentrate his efforts on one parish. This parsimonious method of supplying churches lays a great burden upon the preacher and causes a great loss in his efficiency. The preacher is overworked and the parish is underworked.

Isolation

In many country pastorates there is a great disadvantage in the isolation of the pastor from kindred spirits. A pastor often finds in some of the officers or members of his Church those who are in sympathy with his ideals and who understand his highest aspirations. He can enjoy their spiritual fellowship and has the assurance that they are his helpers and supporters. But if the pastor has received the preparation and training that his office requires, his standard of ethics, his sphere of thought, his vision of duty must be, in some measure, different from the ethical ideas and thinking of the majority of the people of the community Sometimes a minister is met with who has the name of being a "mixer"; who, nothwithstanding the fact that he has been associated with the lofty themes of Scripture, and his studies have led him, one might

suppose, to the loftiest and noblest ideals of ethical conduct, and to the most exalted visions of life and duty, yet is indolent in his habits, uncultivated or vulgar in his conversation, low in his ideals and devoid of true ethical conceptions of life. Such a man will find congenial company, not in the truly spiritual members of the Church, but among the worldly and profane. The "hale fellow well met" may have no sense of isolation, since the world is his natural companion. But no doubt the reader will agree that this type is rare; and that the great majority of men in the ministry, in our day, at least, possess, in some degree, those qualities that separate them from the mass of men. He who is truly a prophet must live apart. The "rural prophet" may find the warm-hearted people among whom he labors hospitable and kind; many among them are his equals in culture. But the average rural pastor, who is faithful to his highest mission and ideals, feels the painful isolation of his life in the constant struggle to realize his ideals in the face of the apathy of the community and the inertia of the Church. The apathy that meets every effort to advance calls for the highest prophetic gifts and the greatest

patience. If the pastor fails at this point—if he succumbs to the pressure of the popular contentment with the things that are, and satisfies himself that he does his duty in sustaining the routine of church work, he has lost his prophetic gift.

The Mission of the Prophet

In the changing conditions of our times, the right of the country pastor to claim to be the "rural prophet" might be called in question. The emphasis of the office of the minister has changed, yet his office as a prophet has not passed away. When he is no longer accorded the dignity of a clergyman or the respect of a minister, or the authority of a teacher, he must then go forth clad in the rough mantle of his office, as a prophet, a messenger of God, with a vision of the Kingdom of God at hand, and compel men to hear his message and inspire them to live up to the vision of the coming kingdom. Whatever contempt may have been associated in the past with the name "country parson," the faithful country pastor now faces the world, conscious that he is a commanding figure in one of the most important movements of modern times—the awakening and the organization of our rural forces for the uplift of mankind.

XVII

RURAL TYPES AND HOMES

THE general principles discovered in the study of the country-church problem are modified by local conditions in their application to each particular community. The character of men of influence in the community, the leaders of the people, or of any portion of the people, has an important bearing on the problems of establishing the principles of the gospel in the community. Those who desire to accomplish the evangelization and Christianization of a rural neighborhood should make special study of local conditions and of those persons who are recognized leaders.

Local Social Studies

The study of special city types and the home life of the slums is germane to the work of city missionaries and civic reformers; the methods of the ward boss, the habits of the alley gang, and the life of the tenement are sympathetically studied by those who engage in the work of evangelizing the cities.

RURAL TYPES AND HOMES

The types that deserve special study in the country are very different from the special types to be studied in the cities. Literature has given a romantic value to many of these rural types. In books they have been described in great variety and detail. To the missionary or pastor working in the country these local rural types have an interest beyond the interest that arises from the mere love of the simple, the quaint, and the beautiful in human life. The study of the people and their homes is an essential factor in the success of the Church in the country. An efficient pastor, whom the writer knew, kept up a systematic study of the leading characters of the community, making careful record of his observations from time to time. On his record-sheets he made an analysis of these characters and made notes of suggestive methods by which these persons might be dealt with in the accomplishment of spiritual results.

A "Sociological Canvass"

The Rev. Charles E. Hayward recommends a "sociological canvass" of the parish. He testifies that the practise has been of great service to him in his pastoral work. In his book, "Institutional Work for the Country Church,"

he describes the method which he has followed. The blanks recommended in Mr. Hayward's book to be used in this canvass provide for many details under the heads: "possessions owned by the family, sources of income, family names, arrangements of home life, social life, religious life, pathological conditions, and miscellaneous." The pastor gathers this information for his own use, and without resorting to offensive methods. By alertness, observation, and in the interest he feels in the daily life of his people he collects these valuable facts in the ordinary course of his pastoral duties.

Other pastors have been helped by the use of similar methods of their own, even when their methods have been less systematic and thorough. The information acquired in such character-study or sociological study is recorded on cards or sheets and properly indexed for the pastor's guidance in conducting the work of the parish.

Rural Types

There are men in every community who, through certain individual qualities of native ability and originality, social position, wealth or profession, have special influence in the community. Whether they are members of the

Church or not, these persons deserve the special attention of the pastor.

The country school-teacher ought to be a more permanent factor in the community than he has been in the past. But even if the teacher is in the neighborhood for a brief time only, the pastor should reckon on the teacher as an important factor in the community life. The school-teacher of the olden days is a romantic memory: he taught in a log schoolhouse, "boarded 'round" among the patrons of the school, and figured prominently in the "lyceums" and debates of those days. The influence of those early teachers in laying the foundations of our present social order can not be measured. They inspired many country boys in their backwoods schools to seek after the meager learning that was then accessible. From their schools went forth the boys who afterward became the ministers, physicians, lawyers, teachers, and statesmen who wrought out the institutions of liberty.

The Teacher

The type of teachers has changed greatly since then, but the teacher is still an important factor in rural development. Swift changes are now going

on in rural school plans and methods. The pastor should keep in close touch with these changes. The introduction of township high-schools and the study of agriculture in the rural schools are bringing the schools into more vital relations with the progress of country life. The teacher is the center of this movement and should be studied as a force in the advancement of the community. The study of the teacher should be done quietly and in a sympathetic way.

The Editor

The editor of the country newspaper may be studied to great advantage. He is usually found to be an efficient advocate of every movement for the good of the community. The outlying farming districts, with which the present studies are concerned, are usually connected with a town or village, the center of a group of rural communities which together support a newspaper published in the town. The editor is often an interesting study in himself. Viewed from the standpoint of the Church, the influence and attitude of the editor in matters of local and general welfare are of great importance.

The country doctor has been canonized in litera-

ture; but the country "doctor of the old school" is with us still. I saw him only a few days ago, a white-haired old man with a well-preserved body and a clear head. He was attending at the bedside of a little boy, kindly and cheerfully, and held the confidence of the anxious family. And there are many younger men in the medical profession who have not forgotten the spirit of their ministry in faithfulness and sympathy. "The doctor" is often a great force for good in the community and must be counted in the reckoning of rural character and influence. He is with the people in their sorest trials; in the hour of need, day or night, in blinding storm or biting cold, he comes into their homes. The position and service of the physician challenges the thoughtful attention of the pastor and the Church.

The Doctor

The country storekeeper, the country lawyer, the squire, and other types must be studied and their acquaintance must be cultivated if the pastor is to stand in the midst and direct with a masterly strategy the work of the Church in impressing Christian principles upon the community. The pastor may not find specific use

Other Personal Factors

for all the facts which he collects in a careful study of the people and their homes, but it is his right and duty to have a clear analysis and estimate of the personal factors in the problem of the social and religious advancement of the community.

These personal factors differ in the different sections of the country. The country towns of New England, the vast wheat ranches of the Northwest, the old communities and the new settlements, have varied types of character and home life which require fresh, first-hand, thorough study, as well as earnest and enthusiastic work.

There are "rural slums." The saloon at the cross-roads or in the village is a breeding-place of vice. There are country places where vice and lawlessness abound, where idleness and licentiousness prevail, and a shiftless population of the "Jukes" variety produces a type of character and home life that constitutes a peril to the country as serious, if not so generally threatening, as the slums of our cities. The Church that is located in such a community can not overlook its social problems and must study the life and social conditions of the people of the degenerate com-

"Rural Slums"

munity, combining this study with sincere and sensible efforts to bring practical and spiritual Christianity into these lives.

It is the special function of the country church to develop and conserve that beautiful ideal of home which is the product of Christian teaching alone. This study of the people and home life of the country is not a "weariness of the flesh"; it is a fascinating study in itself, and has an important part in the solution of the problems of the Christian culture of the rural homes and social life.

Ideals in the Home

XVIII

THE COUNTRY CHURCH AND FUTURE LEADERSHIP

"WE call one century the century of discovery; we call another century the century of analysis. It is the fashion to call the nineteenth century the century of science. Our children's children will learn to call the twentieth century the century of moral forces."[1]

The Leadership of Moral Forces

The century of discovery required the leadership of the bold and adventurous navigators; the century of analysis required the leadership of the great philosophers; the century of science required the leadership of the patient investigators; and this century of moral forces calls for leadership of the highest type, combining the high qualifications of the leadership of all the great centuries, courage, discernment, and originality, and possessing the additional quality of spirituality.

[1] Dr. E. E. Hale, *Homiletic Review,* January, 1908.

FUTURE LEADERSHIP

John R. Mott, whose world-wide experience has fitted him to speak for the world, voices this need of the twentieth century in his recent book, "The Future Leadership of the Church." In presenting the problem of the supply of capable men for the leadership of the Church in these momentous times, he insists that the demand for stronger men is even more imperative than the appeal for more men: men who are able to organize, lead, and inspire others to work. "This point," he declares, "is more important than ever before." "If our religion is to be great and to do great things, it must be in the care of great souls—souls great in illumination and in intense and pure desire." [1]

Country-bred Leaders

The leadership of the Church and the nation in the past has come from the country. It is commonly estimated that at least 75 per cent of the men and women of influence in Church and national life were born and reared in country homes. Anderson says, "Thus far country-bred men have dominated our entire civilization." [2] We may, in this case, judge the future by the past

[1] "Future Leadership of the Church" (Mott), page 12.
[2] "The Country Town" (Anderson), page 97.

and conclude that the leadership of this century of great moral ideas must be found in the country. "The cities," says Mott, "can not be relied upon to furnish the Christian leaders of the future. The work of the Church in the country districts must be carried on with efficiency and power in order to insure the raising up of sufficient Christian forces to cultivate the city fields."[1]

The Nursery of Leadership

All the facts that have been collected recently by different investigators to show the urgency of the problem of leadership for the Church intensify the need of an expansion in the policies of the Church at large respecting the maintenance of effective work in country parishes. These are the recruiting stations where the future leaders of the armies of the kingdom are enlisted. If the Church is to dominate the life of the future it will be through the leadership of able men in sufficient numbers to accomplish the work extending so marvelously in these days. And the greater proportion of the future leaders must come from the country churches.

Many facts are cited to show the important part

[1] "The Future Leadership of the Church," page 137.

country churches have had in the development of leadership. A little country church in Vermont has produced fifteen ministers. A congregation in Ohio, during a single pastorate, furnished nineteen men for the ministry. Six daughters of this pastor became wives of ministers. A New York congregation has been the nursery of thirty-two ministers. Mr. Mott mentions a country church in Canada which displays the pictures of thirty men who have gone out of that country parish into the Christian ministry.[1]

Illustrations

These country churches should be imprest with the importance of their position: they hold the key to the future success of the kingdom. It is their privilege to develop the future leadership of the Church and to make the men who shall direct the moral forces of this century.

The Making of Leaders

The commercial activities of the times offer such opportunities to young men, and the Church seems to be struck with stage-fright at the thought of asking young men to enter the ministry in these throbbing times of great affairs. A generation ago it was regarded as a part of the minister's calling to

[1] Same, page 149.

seek out suitable young men for the work of the ministry and to impress upon them the obligation to devote themselves to that work. And there should be a revival of activity in country churches in the effort to secure and train suitable men for the ministry.

Country boys are protected, in some degree, from the influences that deter young men in the city from choosing the ministry. The distracting influences of the city's varied opportunities do not appeal so directly to the country boys. Church life occupies relatively a larger place in the country than in the city. There is not so much to interfere with the home life in the country and the home life has a strong influence in directing men to the course of leadership in the Church. These advantages which the country church possesses enlarge its opportunities in the making of the leaders of the future and increase the glory of its service.

"Great Fields of Usefulness"

The report of the Country Life Commission contains this statement: "The farming country is by no means devoid of leaders, and is not lost or incapable of helping itself, but it has been relatively overlooked by per-

sons who are seeking great fields of usefulness." The pastorate of a country church is a great field of usefulness. It is a field that calls for special qualifications and special heroism, a feature of the ministerial office which is receiving special emphasis in these days. The Country Life Commission suggests that it may be necessary to make an "appeal to the heroic young men" to supply the needs of the rural pastorates, and Mr. Roosevelt, just before he retired from the Presidency, wrote concerning the supply of able men for the ministry and emphasized its opportunities for heroic service as follows:

Roosevelt on the "Great Adventure"

"The work to be done is not easy. It is because of this very fact that the best, the most resolute, the most daring spirits should listen to the summons which calls them to the life of effort and of conflict. We ask that men of heroic temper undertake the great adventure. Heroic deeds are to be done in this struggle, and we ask for heroic men to go forward and do them."

The appeal to heroic men to undertake the "great adventure" applies with special force to the "great fields of usefulness" open to ministers who serve in rural parishes. Here is a field calling for noble

sacrifice and true heroism; an opportunity for courageous service and high accomplishment that is not surpassed in the field of commerce, politics, or invention.

Frontier Pastors

The pioneer missionaries in the early days illustrated the possibilities of pastoral work as a field for heroism in newly-settled regions. Clad in buckskin, they traveled on horseback, on foot, and by canoe through primeval forests, from settlement to settlement, establishing stations and ministering to their scattered flocks. They forded streams, climbed mountains, and endured the exposure and perils of the wilderness. The excitement and adventure of pioneer days do not now attract young men to the life of the frontier. Yet there are still vast areas of our country which offer opportunity for sanctified heroism. Among the mountaineers of the South, on the sheep and cattle ranges of the West, among the ranches springing out of the desert by the magic of irrigation, and among the lumber-camps of the North, there is great opportunity for self-denying, heroic, and perilous service in the business of the King.

The decadent communities of the older States call

for heroism of a different type. Whether the lowering of the moral tone of the community arises from the actual depletion of the population or by the establishment of industries which bring into the community elements that do not assimilate with its social life and institutions, the situation appeals to persons who are seeking great fields of usefulness. In such fields men are invited to exercise their keenest powers of thought and their most self-denying labors. Decadent communities and discouraged churches offer a field fitted to men of the highest type of ability and courage. Men of heroic mold are needed; men who are inspired by a creative energy to take that which seems dead and to breathe into it the breath of life. A man who gives himself to the quickening of such a community may not experience the excitement of bronco-busting or Indian fighting, but he will enjoy the most exalted satisfaction that heroism can bring.

The Appeal of Weak Communities

A missionary became pastor of a New England church when the Church and the community were on the down grade. The Church was broken into factions and on the point of disruption. Its membership had been

Heroism with an Evangelistic Note

reduced by death and removals. The pastor took up the work and sounded the evangelistic note. In a short time the old gospel had reached the old community; the work of quickening and revival began, the people were united and supported the Church most earnestly and gave to the cause of missions and a transformation of the community began.[1] This is an illustration of the decadent Church under the inspiration of an heroic leader who lays emphasis on the evangelistic message of the gospel to the individual and the community.

Heroism with a Social Service Note

There is a wide range for the exercise of the keenest and most varied faculties in the community or Church that is on the down grade. A man accepted the pastorate of a weak country church. He was a man of versatile gifts and his friends thought he should not bury himself in such an obscure and unpromising field. The people were scattered and lonely and eager for petty gossip. The wise pastor took advantage of this fault, gave the young people something to do, organized the boys and got them interested in a newspaper printed first on a mimeo-

[1] Case reported by Wells in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, April, 1907.

graph and later on a small printing-press. He invited the young people to the manse to look at some pictures, and before they knew it they were studying the life of St. Paul. Soon the Bible-study class was the biggest and most talked-of thing in the community. The "Corners" was a loafing and drinking place. The pastor hired a room and with the aid of a few persons who had faith in it, fitted it up for a reading-room, and furnished it brightly. A phonograph, the magazines, papers, some books and games did the rest. Young men found something better than loafing. Soon they wanted some helpful talks on getting on in the world; and the narrow parish in which this heroic minister had buried himself began to grow into magnificent proportions." [1]

Two personalities are prominent in the history of divine accomplishment through humanity: the farmer and the preacher. The first great want felt by creation was for "a man to till the ground." The first great commission of the Creator to man required him to subdue the earth; the last great commission of the ascending Savior was to preach the gospel in all the world. This final commission to

[1] Case reported by Cowan in *Homiletic Review.*

man as world-wide preacher is the complement of the primal commission to man as world-wide farmer. The tiller of the soil and the toiler for souls have always held a close relation in the designs and providence of God.

These two personalities combined in the person of the rural pastor make his office one of preeminent value. It is his high privilege to frame the pattern of life which molds our national strength and beauty—the Christian rural home, and to nourish manhood and develop noble leadership in the nursery of spiritual strength and beauty—the country church.

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